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ABSTRACT

This guidebook presents strategic interventions for community change. It is designed to build an understanding of six strategic interventions and create the capacity to deploy them. It helps local education funds (LEF) engage their communities, organize parents and other residents, advocate for sound policy, and work with districts and teachers. These activities fall into six categories: community dialogue, constituency building for organizing and advocacy, engaging practitioners, collaboration with districts, policy analysis, and legal strategies. Each of the interventions includes the following components: a description of and rationale for the intervention; two LEF examples of the intervention at work; lessons learned from the efforts (key lessons from both of the LEFs are compiled); tools (such as questionnaires, a facilitator's guide, and models of related efforts) to help LEFs implement interventions on their own; and resources that provide references to additional information. (SM)

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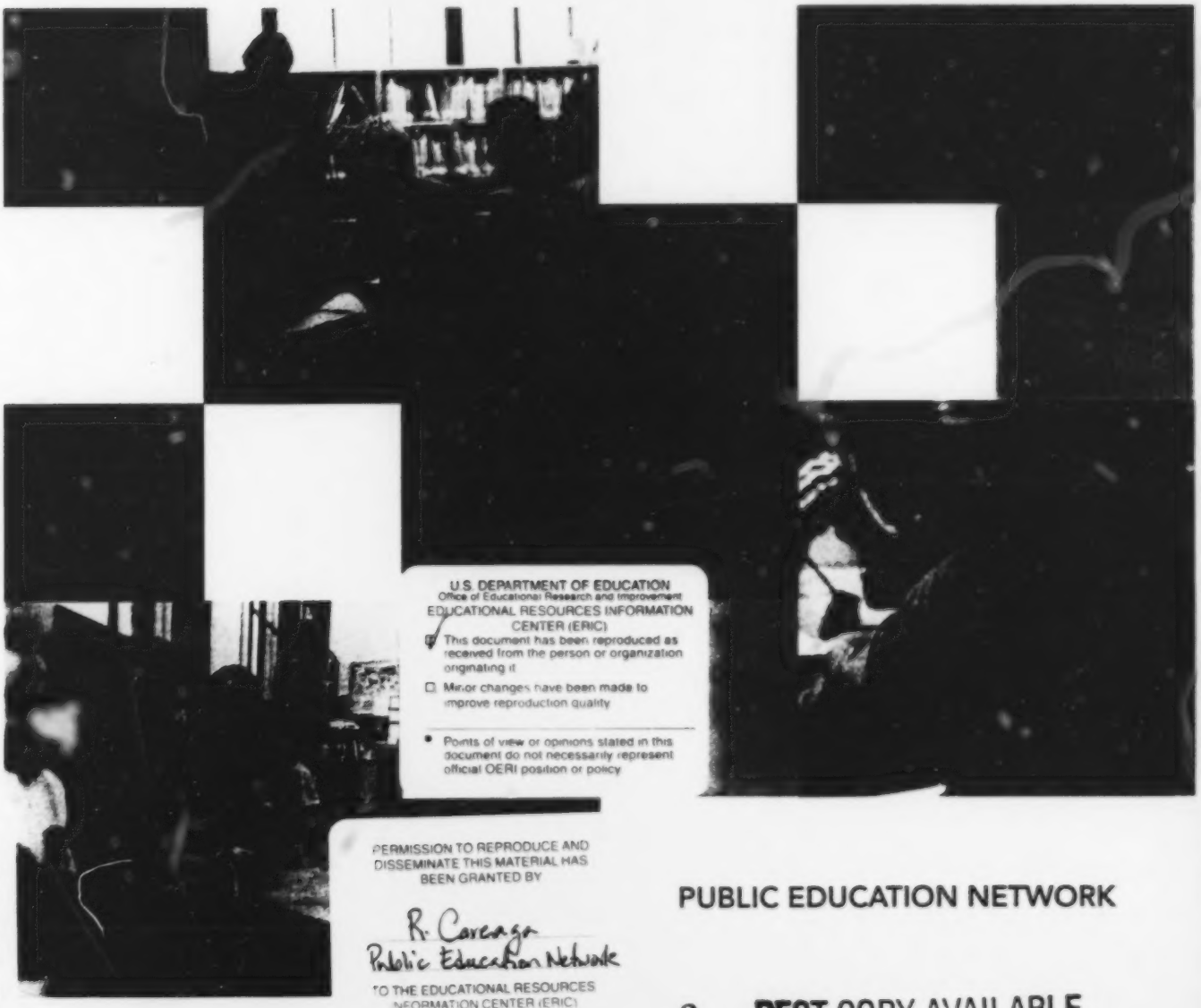
Communities at work

A Guidebook of Strategic Interventions for Community Change



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PUBLIC EDUCATION NETWORK

The mission of the Public Education Network (PEN) is to create systems of public education that result in high achievement for every child. Improving public school systems is the responsibility of parents, individual citizens and whole communities. The Network's goal is to ensure the availability of high-quality public education to every child in America, particularly the poor and disadvantaged. Increasing student achievement requires significant changes in our nation's public schools, including: implementing high standards, improving teacher quality and providing professional development, updating curriculum and assessment practices, equalizing school financing and building relationships between schools and the communities they serve. Through 66 members in 28 states and the District of Columbia, PEN impacts more than 5.9 million children — representing 13% of all children attending public school in America — in more than 300 school districts and 8,200 individual schools. In the last two years, PEN and its local education fund members provided nearly $300 million to the nation's public schools through more than 300 targeted school and community improvement programs.

LOCAL EDUCATION FUNDS

Local education funds (LEFs) are nonprofit, community-based organizations who work to improve student achievement for all children attending public schools. A local education fund engages citizens and policymakers in systemic school improvement, administers innovative school programs, brokers resources, awards grants and enhances the visibility and value of the public schools.

Local education funds are independent of the school districts they serve and are focused on the improvement and reform of the public school system as a whole. LEFs are organized as ongoing community organizations with professional full-time staff and a board of directors reflective of the communities they serve.

LEFs work with public school systems, serving a significant population of disadvantaged students. Fifty-three percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in the communities served by Network members, compared to the U.S. average of 33 percent. Nearly two-thirds of the children reached by the Network are children of color.

LEFs convene a wide range of stakeholders to help develop and implement local public school improvement strategies. In cooperation with schools, businesses and other community-based organizations, LEFs broker creative school reform initiatives with teachers, school boards and administrators.

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At the core of American democracy is the notion that the problems of communities cannot be left to policymakers and other leaders alone. Citizens must participate, either directly or through the election of those who represent their beliefs.

Democracy is more than just a belief in the importance of basic human rights such as equality, freedom, opportunity and the pursuit of happiness. At the core of American democracy is the notion that the problems of communities cannot be left to policymakers and other leaders alone. Citizens must participate, either directly or through the election of those who represent their beliefs.

For 225 years, Americans have answered democracy's clarion call: coming together to solve problems openly and thoughtfully.

More recently, devolution — the shift of major activities and services from federal to local control — has bolstered the belief that local communities can and should solve their own problems. This shift of power and responsibility has created new demand for services and supports at state and local levels.

Across a wide range of issues — health, welfare, education and economic development — communities are struggling to improve the capacity to solve problems collectively. But often, a community's capacity for problem solving is challenged by changing demographics, disengaged citizens, fragmented public policy and inequitable distribution of resources.

Local responsibility for healthy, productive and successful schools requires different kinds of collaborative relationships between schools and their communities. Community-based organizations often are catalysts for bringing people together. They provide services and supports that once came from government. They serve to strategically organize and mobilize groups toward specific actions, outcomes and goals. Community-based organizations are not political entities, but they do represent the beliefs of their members and often add value to the political and policy debate. They represent democracy in action.

Local problem solving requires new relationships, decisions, behaviors and norms. After they've been developed, community leaders and residents can move toward sustainable, long-term change.

Public Schools: Centers of Community Life

Public Education Network's recent survey, *Action for All: The Public's Responsibility for Public Education*, reported that the vast majority of Americans have a deep-rooted commitment to make schools better for all children. Americans see their public schools as the centers around which community life revolves, and they recognize that quality public schools have a value beyond measure. Public schools are the key to the well-being of our communities and our future prosperity as a nation. The health of public schools is a barometer of our democratic way of life.

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Americans see their public schools as the common center around which community life revolves.

Public Education Network (PEN) believes that community demand for change is critical, particularly in low-income communities, where schools are failing and students are not succeeding. Where the education system is not working, the public needs to reclaim its responsibility for community change. PEN believes that the public not only has the right to demand high quality in its schools; it also has a *responsibility* to improve and protect public education.

But in the very communities where students face the most barriers to achieving at high levels and meeting new academic requirements, residents are often disengaged from their schools. Many community members have given up on their local schools, feeling that they have no control over school quality. Indifference, disillusionment and outright hostility between parents or other community members and educators often replace dialogue, common goals and collaboration.

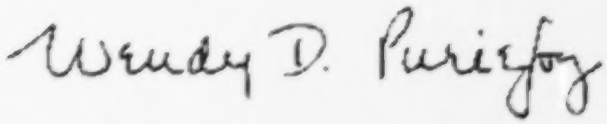
The Work of Local Education Funds: Democracy in Action

For more than 15 years, local education funds (LEFs) have helped to create sustainable change in public education systems nationwide. As independent community organizations, LEFs work with local school districts and communities to design collaborative solutions that improve public schools and promote student achievement.

They have played the roles of conveners, brokers and coordinators of school reform activities. LEFs have built partnerships between schools and communities, leveraged resources and spearheaded community action to improve individual public schools and entire school districts.

In 15 years, more than 66 local education funds have developed a body of knowledge about mobilizing local resources and engaging the public to support long-term and systemic solutions to the problems of public education. This historical perspective has deepened the Network's understanding of what it takes to create a community with new relationships, norms and capacities for problem solving and has led to new thinking about a framework of six strategic interventions for community change. These interventions are expressions of democracy.

Communities at Work is a testament to the dedication of LEFs and MetLife Foundation in addressing challenging problems that prevent communities from ensuring a high-quality education for every child. Since the mid-1990s, MetLife has supported an examination of gender equity in classrooms, promoted a discussion and review of safety issues during a series of violent attacks in our public schools and provided timely support to local improvement efforts. PEN is proud to work with MetLife on a guide to help accelerate progress in communities toward achieving equity and opportunity for all children.



Wendy D. Puriefoy
President, Public Education Network

six

Strategic Interventions

What does it look like to have parents, business leaders, taxpayers without schoolchildren and other community members taking responsibility for public education?

More than a simple list of ways that LEFs go about their work, the interventions defined in this guide represent the Public Education Network's blueprint of engagement for public education. This guide is community engagement, as practiced by LEFs, made visible.

Before people can act — or act effectively in collaborative ways — they first must be able to identify clearly the problems they face in the context of other civic issues. This naming and framing of the problem and appropriate action are important steps in the process of engaging others in collaborative action. Once the problem is defined, understanding what action to take is critical to mobilizing and deploying appropriate resources and building the capacity of community members to address any larger, systemic challenges in the future.

Local education funds engage their communities, organize parents and other residents, advocate for sound policy and work with districts and teachers. These activities fall mainly into six interventions:

- **Community Dialogue**
- **Constituency Building**
- **Engaging Practitioners**
- **Collaboration with Districts**
- **Policy Analysis**
- **Legal Strategies**

The health of public schools is a barometer of our democratic way of life.

This guide provides a description of each of these strategies and examples of how each works in practice. However, it is important to note that the interventions are not strictly discrete or linear; each intervention is a dynamic component of a systematic approach to problem solving.

Because of the natural overlap across the interventions, they are not intended to be implemented in isolation. Individually, they represent different ways of working to engage the community in school improvement. When all six interventions occur together, communities have the synergy and momentum to create lasting change for the public education system.

It is also important to note that no one group of stakeholders can implement all of the interventions. In some instances, local education funds may lead or direct the action; in others, LEFs may be a participant. This changing role of leadership is an important part of building the relationships and norms that are important for sustaining long-term community change. No single organization, no matter how well-organized or how representative of the community, can create systemic change by itself.

The probability of getting more local education funds to practice these types of engagement is enhanced if people can name, understand and internalize them. By putting a name on the interventions, describing them and identifying examples of them in practice, supplying additional resources of information and providing tools to help local education funds apply the interventions, it is our hope to prompt further discussion of them.

How the Guide Is Organized

Building understanding of the six key strategic interventions and creating the capacity to deploy them is what this guide is all about.

A separate section for each intervention includes the following components:

Description of the intervention. A rationale for the need for each intervention is provided as is a description of how local education funds deploy it.

LEF examples of the intervention at work. Each section highlights two examples of LEF work in that intervention. Each LEF story comes from a major PEN initiative over the past eight years; LEFs in the initiatives were identified for their strength in representing the intervention at work. Contact information for each LEF is included to encourage additional conversations and learning.

Lessons learned from these efforts. Local education funds that wish to undertake similar efforts can avoid missteps and accelerate progress by reviewing important lessons learned from the LEFs featured in each section. Key lessons from both of the LEFs are compiled into one list for easy reference.

Tools. Each section includes tools (such as questionnaires, facilitator's guide and models of related efforts) that can help LEFs implement the interventions on their own.

More information. The resources in each section — produced by and for LEFs — provide references to additional information to help you understand the intervention and to clarify the organizations working in these areas. Beyond these resources, more information about these national initiatives is available on PEN's Web site (www.PublicEducation.org).

INTERVENTION

Community Dialogue

If citizens are truly to help define what they want for their public schools, and if they are going to act to help achieve those ends for all students, it is important to bring them together to articulate their beliefs, goals and areas of shared understanding. In public dialogue, citizens can come to agreement on goals for their public schools and their community and develop plausible local strategies to work toward those goals.

Community dialogue presents opportunities to educate communities about important concepts: how the education system works, meaningful data that show how effective the system is and what constitutes a quality education. With a new, common understanding, citizens can then develop a collective commitment to improving their public schools. It's not enough just to talk; public dialogue needs to be structured to produce action-oriented outcomes.

Engagement opportunities broaden the diversity of people involved and renew their commitment to common goals. In many cases, dialogue serves to raise expectations for community change. The knowledge gathered in public forums informs and convinces people of the need to advocate for specific action to improve public schools.

Local education funds often serve as conveners and facilitators in this work. LEFs don't convene community conversation and dialogue simply to put forth a point of view. Instead, they create opportunities for dialogue by building effective partnerships among community-based organizations, schools, faith-based groups, elected officials and citizens. Forums for this dialogue include strategic planning processes, town meetings and education roundtables.

Local education funds face the challenges of moving communities from talk to action and of including appropriate stakeholders at the right time. Often, as conveners, LEFs also need to mediate divisive, deeply entrenched beliefs to keep the dialogue productive.

The following vignettes show how two local education funds approached the work and goals of this strategic intervention.

Public Education Fund
Hattiesburg Area Education Foundation

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Public Education Fund
Gender Equity Project

Few formats for dealing with the issues of equity and harassment bring forth the honest conversations that are needed to change attitudes and policies.

Challenge

The hard issues of equity and sexual harassment in schools — especially in the current education landscape so focused on standards and accountability — need creative ways to get the attention they deserve. Few formats for raising and dealing with the issues of equity and harassment bring forth the honest and productive conversations that are needed to change attitudes and policies.

Strategic Intervention

In 1998, the Public Education Fund (PEF) in Providence, RI, was one of 10 local education funds to lead local community conversations and action-planning on gender equity. All of the LEFs involved used the findings of the Metropolitan Life Foundation's *1997 Survey of the American Teacher* as a starting place and then tailored their own community dialogue format for public engagement and action on local issues.

PEF used a focus group format with research-based questions to structure conversations among middle school girls about problems of equity and harassment. The local education fund then used these findings to engage others in the district and the community in addressing the problems raised by students.

LEF Work

To explore difficult gender issues in schools with students, PEF designed focus groups with research-based questions that would get at key issues of gender equity and harassment for middle school girls. PEF chose students of middle school age because, according to research, it is at this time when girls' self-esteem and academic expectations for themselves tend to plummet. Focus group leaders asked questions about the girls' plans for the future, how teachers have encouraged them and what difference gender and race make both at school and in determining their life goals.

PEF designed and conducted focus groups in three Providence middle schools in which it had worked in the past. PEF staff recruited participants through school-based family centers and after-school programs and conducted the conversations in settings where students felt comfortable. Students volunteered to participate and received $10 stipends.

One of the most significant findings reported by the girls was that sexual harassment is a daily occurrence and that it impedes their ability to do well in school.

PEF brought attention to the harassment issues and engaged school personnel in devising ways to address the problems. The local education fund talked with principals and staff at participating schools and with district leaders about the findings to seek feedback about appropriate interventions. These conversations pointed to the need for several actions regarding sexual harassment in schools:

- Ensure better explanation and greater awareness of school and district policies and state laws concerning sexual harassment
- Provide professional development for faculty on student and adult rights and responsibilities
- Analyze student performance data according to gender to examine how equity issues affect achievement
- Build greater awareness among families of their rights and responsibilities to empower and educate their daughters and sons

Although the district had on its agenda plans to address harassment issues, PEF helped create urgency to act by showing the district that female students weren't feeling safe in schools.

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Results

"PEF's Gender Equity Project pushed a more immediate district-level response to the issues," recalls Andrea Ferreira, project director of the initiative. The school district's Office for Equity and Access created a plain-language version of the school district's harassment policy and distributed it in poster-size versions for schools to post prominently.

Although the district took immediate action, its progress hasn't continued at the same level without outside pressure from the local education fund and others. "The conversations and engagement around equity and harassment helped raise the issues and started people talking about them. This is important when school districts face so many competing priorities," says Ferreira.

The project also had a ripple effect on PEF's grantmaking and involvement in health-education programming. As a result of the Gender Equity Project, PEF focused more of its mini-grants for teachers on issues that deal with women and girls, including several classroom-based projects that focused on girls in the sciences.

In addition, PEF brought the focus group findings to the attention of the Healthy Schools Advisory Council. Members of the council, in turn, worked with faculty in their respective schools to better understand district policies about harassment. The council also worked to incorporate the new lessons and activities on respect and safety into the district's health-education curriculum.

LEF Contact Information

Public Education Fund
Margaretta Edwards, Director
Andrea V. Ferreira, Program Officer
15 Westminster Street, Suite 824
Providence, RI 02903
ph: 401-454-1050 fax: 401-454-1059 Web: www.ri.net/PEF

Although the district had planned to address harassment issues, the Public Education Fund helped create urgency by showing that female students weren't feeling safe in schools.

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Hattiesburg Area Education Foundation

National Conversations on Education and Race

Challenge

A racially mixed, two-county area in Mississippi has faced longtime divisions of geography, socioeconomics and race. District ratings from the state magnified these divisions in 1998 when the ratings were released without explanation of the indicators used to measure success. In 2002, when the state releases school-by-school ratings, racial divisions will become more evident. To understand the implications of these ratings, educators, families and communities needed opportunities for dialogue and action planning.

Strategic Intervention

The Hattiesburg Area Education Foundation (HAEF) pulled together people from all walks of life in the two-county area to talk about the rationale for the ratings and ways parents and other citizens can support higher levels of achievement. HAEF and seven other local education funds used a town hall meeting framework — developed by PEN and Public Agenda — to create action steps for improving the quality of education for all students.

Results

In a town hall meeting at a local high school, HAEF brought teachers, parents and other community members together to discuss the school ratings and learn about new school-by-school student achievement data on the upcoming 2002 Mississippi Report Card.

To prepare for the dialogues, HAEF worked with Mission Mississippi (a network of black and white churches), the Mississippi Department of Education and county governments. At the meeting, teams of African-American and white moderators led two-hour small group discussions. Local churches hosted follow-up conversations.

The community dialogues revealed a significant disconnect between parents and educators on achievement issues. HAEF learned that before a divided community can fully address a serious achievement gap, parents and teachers need to understand and agree upon ways to support and equitably measure student learning and achievement. As well, educators and employers need to agree upon how to nurture and develop skills and attitudes that local graduates must have to succeed in today's work force.

"Only after such issues are addressed by important stakeholder groups through meaningful dialogue will the community provide the support and resources needed to ensure success," notes Sue Van Slyke, executive director of HAEF.

Follow-up activities to the dialogues have been focused on helping families make better connections with schools. In one such activity, HAEF has partnered with the local hospital to build a network of families interested in learning more about their children's development. Every three months, HAEF sends information about early-childhood developmental milestones in parent-friendly language and informs families of more information available at community-based parent centers.

In another follow-up activity, HAEF developed extensive inserts for the local newspaper clarifying standards about what children are expected to know and be able to do in the areas of reading and language arts.

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In its early-childhood follow-up effort to the Education and Race conversations, HAEF has built a database of nearly 1,000 families. HAEF is the only group in the area that is working to bring those families into schools even before their young children start kindergarten.

Each of the eight participating sites in the PEN Education and Race initiative were required to obtain disaggregated data for students in their communities and analyze the data to see how all students performed. HAEF has continued to encourage the Mississippi State Department of Education to make this information available and help communities understand the importance of using disaggregated data to inform decisions about instruction and resource allocation.

LEF Contact Information
Hattiesburg Area Education Foundation
Sue Van Slyke, Executive Director
P.O. Box 710
Hattiesburg, MS 39403
ph: 601-545-5654 fax: 601-545-1057
Web: www.publiceducation.org/lef/mississippi.htm

LEFs participating in the National Conversations on Education and Race found that consensus is a difficult goal to achieve: it's important to look for a deeper understanding of the challenges at hand, rather than consensus on a single solution.

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LESSONS *for* COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Identify barriers to solving the problem before pursuing solutions.

Clearly articulate the problem. The specific problem or issue needs to be clearly defined at the outset of a dialogue or conversation so that participants stay focused on the purpose.

Identify barriers to solving the problem before pursuing solutions. Too often, it is easier to offer solutions before scrutinizing the barriers that have prevented viable solutions in the past. Only when those barriers are clear is it possible to address them directly such that solutions produce long-term, sustainable change.

Engage all sectors in a community. Especially for tough topics with histories of deep-seated divisions, it is important to ensure that a broad range of community groups and residents have a chance to participate in community dialogues and be part of the solution, especially those that have not had a voice in the past.

Be clear about areas of agreement and disagreement. Being clear about the issues on which the community agrees and disagrees moves the process forward and keeps the conversation open and honest. Consensus is a difficult goal to achieve. Look for deeper understanding of the challenges, rather than consensus on a single solution.

Use existing ties with schools or community programs. Students, administrators, teachers and community members are more likely to participate in dialogue if they know and trust the group that's organizing it.

Create action-oriented follow-up steps to dialogue findings. Without a specific action-demanding focus in follow-up steps, stakeholders are less likely to commit to action to address issues raised in community dialogues.

for COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

MODELS FOR COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Public Agenda

Public Agenda provides technical support for public engagement efforts through workshops, research, community conversations (forums), focus groups and opinion surveys. Public Agenda's Town Meeting Framework — used in PEN's Education and Race initiative — is sponsored by local community groups, organized to include diverse participants in small, moderated group discussions of about 15 people. The discussions are centered on understanding differing perspectives and exchanging points of view, not on advocating preexisting opinions and platforms.

Public Agenda · New York, NY · 212-686-6610 · www.publicagenda.org

National Issues Forums

National Issues Forums (NIF) is a network of civic and educational organizations that promotes citizen deliberation in public forums. NIF forums are facilitated discussions that

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make use of a preset framework of options or "choices" and issue discussion materials prepared to formulate shared public judgment. The National Issues Forums Institute helps organizations conduct Public Policy Institutes, which are workshops for training citizens to convene and moderate National Issues Forums.
National Issues Forums · Dayton, OH · 800-433-7834 · www.nifi.org

Study Circles

Study circles are an informal and effective way to provide adult learning and social change. The Study Circles Resource Center promotes the use of public engagement, described as "small-group, democratic and highly participatory discussions." Study circles can vary in size from five to 15 people. Groups can decide how frequently they would like to meet, but generally discussions are held over a series of four two-hour sessions. Discussion leaders, acting as facilitators, guide the discussion by asking questions, identifying key points and managing the group process. Complex issues are broken down into manageable subdivisions, and controversial topics are dealt with in depth.
Study Circles Resource Center · Pomfret, CT · 860-928-2616 · www.studycircles.org

Future Search Conferences

A Future Search Conference is a 2 1/2-day planning meeting that helps large, diverse groups (organizations or communities) discover values, purposes and projects they hold in common and enables people to create a desired future together and act in pursuit of it. The conference brings the "whole system" into the room to work on a task-focused agenda to find common goals and to develop actions to help meet those goals. It is meant to take stakeholders with different purposes and interests within an organization and bring stakeholders together to create a common vision of the future.
Resources for Human Development Inc. · Philadelphia, PA · 800-951-6333 · www.futuresearch.net

Citizens Jury

This process allows policymakers to hear thoughtful citizen input from a group that is both informed and representative of the public. In a citizens jury, a randomly selected and demographically representative panel of people meets for four or five days to carefully examine an issue of public significance. The jury (usually consisting of 18 individuals) hears from a variety of expert witnesses and deliberates the issue. On the final day of their moderated hearings, the members of the citizens jury present their recommendations to the public and policymakers.
The Jefferson Center · Minneapolis, MN · 612-926-3292 · www.jefferson-center.org/citizens_jury.htm

Reconnecting Communities and Schools

Reconnecting Communities and Schools is based on the idea that the relationship between communities and their public schools must fundamentally change. In Reconnecting initiatives, local steering committees — made up of business leaders, educators, citizens and community leaders — organize and run the work. An engagement process is used to produce a communitywide agreement on action steps, and a core group of citizens works to enact the agreement. Supporting materials and technical support from The Harwood Institute help communities sustain the Reconnecting effort over time.
The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation · Bethesda, MD · 301-656-3669 · www.theharwoodinstitute.org

for COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

MANAGING THE CONVERSATION: TIPS FOR FACILITATORS

Participants want to know that their contributions have helped move a solution forward.

Prepare for success. Much of the work of ensuring a good meeting happens before the meeting ever starts. Define the objectives of the meeting — and a clear agenda for getting to them — beforehand. Identify possible perspectives to draw into the conversation. Confirm logistics for a room that fits the objectives of the meeting and where everyone in the conversation can be comfortable, has room to write and has access to light and fresh air. Provide ample food and beverage for the duration of the meeting. Offer periodic breaks for participants.

Get people to talk early. Start the session with energy. A lively, credible speaker who frames the conversation can ensure the meeting starts with some height and energy. Start the session by informing, exciting, empowering and involving participants. Getting all the participants to talk early — even if only to introduce themselves and to say what they hope to get out of the day — can draw them into the group and make it more likely they will actively participate throughout the day. Set ground rules for discussion or norms for the group.

Seek to engage people. The reason to pull people together in person — rather than talking by conference call or simply sending a memo — is to get their input and to see their reactions to different topics of discussion. Be sensitive to nonverbal communication. Try to hear at least once from each participant on each important part of the agenda. Each participant may not need to speak on each issue, but look for a nod or other nonverbal sign that the participant either is comfortable moving on or needs further clarification.

Show that you're listening. Chart the flow of conversation or key themes of discussion on a flip chart to demonstrate that you've heard what people are saying and are taking note of its importance. Understand and expect differences of opinion. Build on what others say, linking an idea to an earlier statement. It's just as important not to disregard any part of the conversation as it is not to allow one or two people to dominate the discussion. Watch time carefully. Keep energy up and conversation moving.

Engage participants in next steps. Participants want to know that their contributions have helped move a solution or a discussion forward. Engage them in developing the next steps, whether those steps define individual or organizational action, or define objectives for a next meeting. Explain to participants what will happen before they meet again. Keep participants engaged between meetings. Follow up with notes or key themes and questions that came up in the meeting.

These tips were expanded from discussion guides of video toolkits developed by the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation and Collaborative Communications Group.

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RESOURCES *for* COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

Quality Now! Results of National Conversations on Education and Race

This toolkit contains guidelines for conducting conversations on education and race and stories of how eight communities carried out public conversations in their neighborhoods and schools. Hands-on tools and resources are available for:

- planning conversations
- conducting research with data on schools and students
- engaging the public to attract diverse participants and elicit honest responses
- publicizing the conversation and its results
- evaluating the conversations
- continuing a dialogue

How to get the resource: Download *Quality Now!* from the Publications section of PEN's Web site.
www.publiceducation.org/pubs

How To Set Up a Public Conversation

This tool helps local education funds set up a safe space in which people can air their own thoughts and listen to others without the acrimony and divisiveness that often accompany a public exchange of views. Developed for the Lilly Governance Project, this tool focuses on conversations between the community and its school board but is adaptable for other conversations.

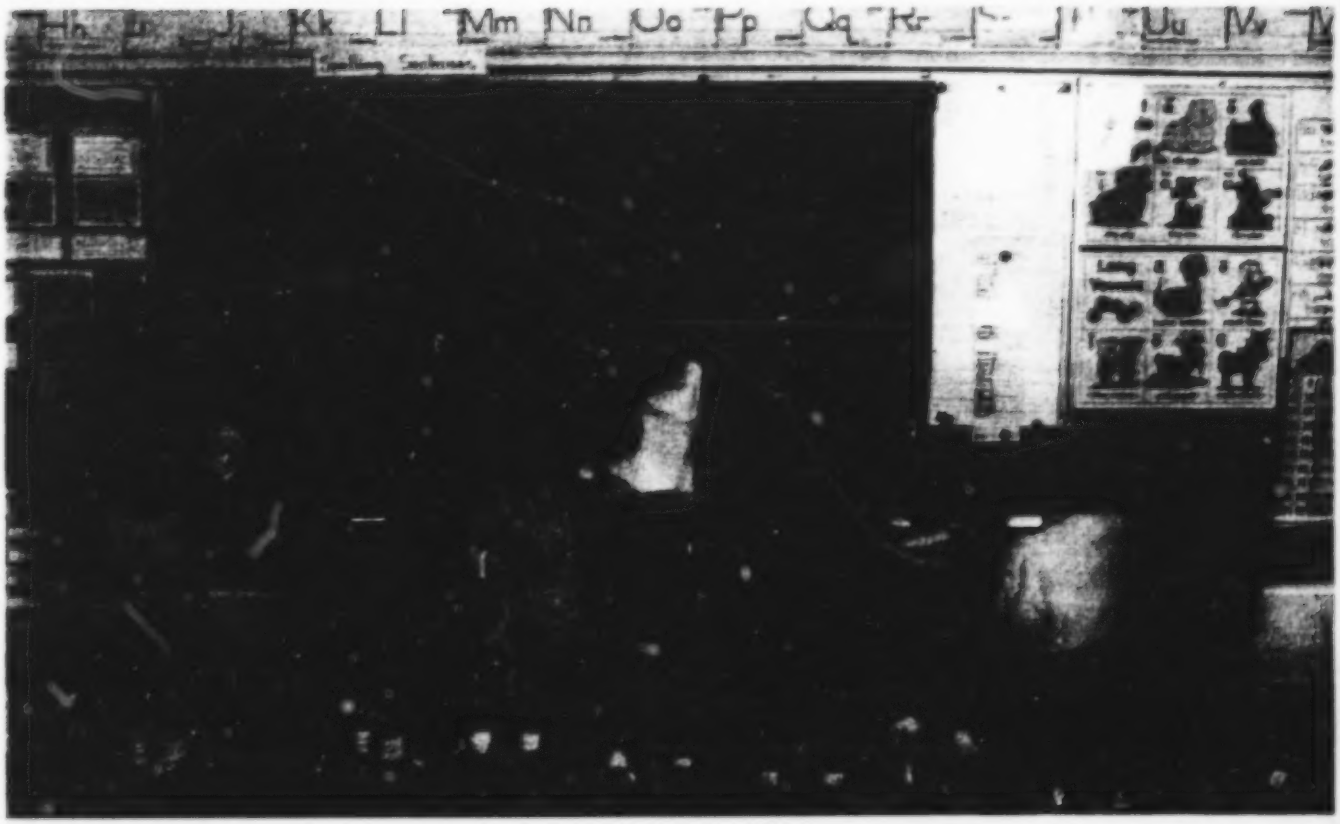
How to get the resource: Go to School Governance in the Resources section of PEN's Web site.
www.publiceducation.org/resources/public_conversation.htm

Do Public Schools Fail Girls? A New Look at Gender Equity

This publication, which is part of PEN's *Lessons from the Field* series, documents the efforts of 10 local education funds to engage their communities in dialogue on issues of gender equity and to develop action steps to address local findings. The publication features examples of how these local education funds translated the community dialogues into action for addressing equity in the context of student achievement.

How to get the resource: Download *Do Public Schools Fail Girls?* from the Publications section of PEN's Web site.
www.publiceducation.org/pubs

It's not enough just to talk; public dialogue needs to be structured to produce action-oriented outcomes.



INTERVENTION

Constituency Building

for Organizing and Advocacy

Community-based efforts to foster improvement in public schools often entail the creation of constituencies — families, youths, educators, businesses, policymakers, civic groups and citizens — that will advocate for specific educational reforms. Building these constituencies requires developing a community's capacity to identify concerns, demand changes, understand how those changes are enacted and create a collective responsibility for change. These constituencies are then empowered to develop their own leadership skills and abilities to use political and educational strategies to shape public discourse and affect policy. Often, these constituencies use these skills and strategies to demand changes in behavior from their community leaders or policymakers.

For local education funds, advocacy is not equivalent to "lobbying" as it is defined in the rules for nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations. Advocacy, as described in this guide, entails developing the alliances and talent that can influence policymakers' actions. Advocacy is about building the relationships and acting on new understandings emanating from community dialogue. To produce results, advocacy requires increasing the number of people behind an effort and developing their capacity to educate others about the issues at hand, publicly in front of policymakers and community leaders.

In some cases, this kind of constituency building happens through grassroots organizing: face-to-face meetings, door-to-door canvassing, house and church meetings open to the public, media campaigns, voter education and meetings with local policymakers and opinion leaders. Often, local education funds do this work indirectly, or they pay attention to other community entities doing this work. They identify, support and rely on community organizers, parents, social services, churches and community agencies. LEFs involve these groups to build and strengthen constituencies that then take responsibility for improving public schools.

The following vignettes show how two local **education funds** approached the work and goals of this strat**egic intervention**.

- Foundation for Educational Enrichment
  APPLE Corps

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Foundation for Educational Enrichment

Comprehensive School Health Initiative/ Children's Health Insurance Project

Challenge

In many communities, health and social service agencies often target the same populations, but their work is rarely coordinated among the agencies or with schools to maximize the effect of these services. When these services are not coordinated nor carefully linked with schools, it is not as efficient or comprehensive as it should be to meet the needs of all children.

Strategic Intervention

A comprehensive community assessment, conducted by the Foundation for Educational Enrichment in Lancaster, PA, pointed to the need for building a community constituency for comprehensive, coordinated services for Lancaster's children. Despite the common misperception that Lancaster is a small Amish community, serving the health, wellness and safety needs of Lancaster's children is a significant task. The School District of Lancaster faces the typical issues of urban districts, with its 11,000-plus students, a large percentage of whom are minority and low-income students.

LEF Work

During the winter of 2000-01, the LEF, the school district and two community partners assessed the Lancaster community's capacity to provide comprehensive school health services. They learned that some of these services are available but function independently of one another and that they could be expanded with greater community partnerships.

In response to significant needs the Foundation saw one of its partners in the assessment — the Network for Safe and Healthy Children — as an immediate and important vehicle for coordinating services. The Network started two years earlier as a small group pulled together by Superintendent Vicki Phillips to address the health and safety needs of children. At the point when the Network was bigger than what the district could feasibly coordinate, the Foundation for Educational Enrichment stepped in with funding and technical assistance.

Network members are all involved in some way with services that affect children and families: the school district, social service and mental-health providers, child protective services, the department of public welfare, local hospitals, staff of local child-care centers, police, the city recreation department, communities of faith, private foundations, boys and girls clubs and local theater companies.

Laura Olin, the Foundation's executive director, represents the local education fund at all Network meetings. The local education fund, with its ability to reach groups that might not be involved otherwise, broadens the Network's capacity to attract a range of interests in the community. "Laura and the LEF are so well-respected in the community. When people know that the Foundation is involved, they're more likely to come to the table," says Heidi Kraft, director of the Network.

Results

Kraft attributes the success of the Network partly to Superintendent Phillips' genuine commitment to community engagement. She also credits the community's history of collaboration and a willingness to come to consensus and work together to solve problems.

After two years of constituency building, the Network regularly convenes 50 representatives

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of community agencies and organizations that plan strategies and pool resources to address the health and safety needs of Lancaster children. Schools and community agencies are connecting and collaborating where they hadn't been before. In effect, Lancaster is building a constituency that is the foundation for improvements in coordinated, seamless services for children and families.

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In many communities, health and social service agencies often target the same populations, but their work is rarely coordinated among the agencies or with schools.

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APPLE Corps
Lilly Governance Project

With trustworthy working relationships, board members were able to address real problems facing the district.

Challenge

School boards are important constituencies for school change, but board members often are caught between responsibilities for setting overarching education policies of a school system and being responsive to the varied interests of the citizens they represent. To balance these roles — and reduce the risk of falling into micromanagement — school board members need training, opportunities to develop good working relationships among themselves and vehicles to communicate with the public on important school governance issues.

Strategic Intervention

Through PEN's Lilly Governance project, APPLE Corps engaged school board members and a cross-section of the community in developing a common vision for school governance in Atlanta. APPLE Corps' initiative was designed to build the Atlanta school board as a model for effective school governance.

LEF Work

APPLE Corps designed a training curriculum for board members to help them understand their roles in supporting quality teaching and learning and to encourage better communication with the community. This training and other board development activities promoted better working relationships among members and a better understanding of their role in relation to the superintendent's role.

As another part of the school governance initiative, APPLE Corps convened business leaders, parents, community groups, teacher organizations and other stakeholders to build understanding and support for the school board's governance role.

With trustworthy working relationships, board members were able to address real problems facing the district. "They were able to build the personal relationships that they needed to do the work without getting embroiled in personal disputes," recalls Sallie Weddell, former director of the Lilly Governance Project at APPLE Corps.

In addition, APPLE Corps and other local education funds participating in the governance initiative reported that once board members appreciated their roles, they were less likely to micromanage decisions related to schools and the system.

Results

"The initiative had a lasting effect on developing the school board as a constituency for school change," says Weddell. "The stature of the school board grew during the initiative, such that the community now sees school board members as professionals and leaders in the school system and in the community."

LEF Contact Information

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LESSONS *for* CONSTITUENCY BUILDING

Committed and visionary leaders are critical. Leaders set the initial tone and rally ongoing involvement. When citizens and community agencies see that key community leaders are committed to a process, they are more likely to stay with the process and bring others in to help.

Develop a collective voice. Strong alliances among stakeholder groups are essential for concerted, collective action. A constituency is only as powerful as its individual members' willingness to project a collective message to advocate for change.

Be as inclusive as possible. Stay vigilant in efforts to include a broad range of constituencies. Continue to ask, Do we have everybody we need at the table? In efforts to determine strategies to benefit students, it's especially important to involve all the people who work with children.

Be creative about bringing people to the table. Invite new and unlikely partners to join the effort. Look for people in the community who care about children but who may not know about the advocacy campaign or how to get involved.

Be patient. Be respectful and patient as people come around the table to find common ground. Participants need time to coalesce around an idea or concept.

Pay attention to the place of the convening. Consider how the location of meetings will affect the attendance or attitudes of participants. For instance, arranging meetings with teachers and school staff members to coincide with in-school meetings promotes greater participation. On the other hand, parents are often more comfortable meeting outside of schools.

CONSTITUENCY BUILDING

for CONSTITUENCY BUILDING

MODELS FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

A key component of PEN's initiatives is that local education funds build grassroots constituencies for public education through community organizing for the purpose of leading a participatory communitywide planning process. The following organizations produce some of the best thinking in the country on community organizing and public deliberation in high-performing communities.

ACORN

The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now is the nation's largest community-organizing network, with a member-

for CONSTITUENCY BUILDING

CONTINUED

Strong alliances among stakeholder groups are essential for concerted, collective action.

ship of more than 125,000 African-American, white and Latino low- and moderate-income families in 500 neighborhood chapters in 40 cities across the country. Major campaigns are designed to reach the unorganized majority of low- and moderate-income people.
ACORN · Brooklyn, NY · 718-246-7900 · www.acorn.org

Industrial Areas Foundation

The Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), founded by Saul Alinsky more than 50 years ago, is now the center of a national network of broad-based, multiethnic, interfaith organizations in primarily poor and moderate-income communities. IAF provides leadership training for organizations to help them foster the competence and confidence of ordinary citizens so that they can reorganize the relationships of power and politics and restructure the physical and civic infrastructure of their communities.
Texas Interfaith Education Fund · Austin, TX · 512-459-6551

National Civic League

The National Civic League (NCL) works directly with communities to foster cross-sector collaboration and grassroots problem solving. NCL's Community Services Teams help equip communities with tools and skills that, when combined with unique partnerships, can build civic leadership and citizen participation and create community change. The teams provide technical assistance to communities of all sizes by convening individuals with diverse perspectives from across the community and working with them to plan and address community challenges.
National Civic League · Denver, CO · 303-571-4343 · www.ncl.org

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING: PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESS

Steve Kest, executive director of ACORN, spoke to several local education funds in July 2001 about community organizing and the value LEFs bring to grassroots organizing efforts.

Principles of Successful Community Organizing

1. Build an organization that is participatory and democratic.
2. Build a representative organization culled from different constituencies in the community.
3. Develop ongoing systems for outreach into the community. The best method is door-to-door outreach, house visits and house meetings that go on throughout the life of the organization.
4. Keep a sense of momentum. Keep confidence in the organization by looking for campaigns that people can be involved in. Set a realistic timeline for activities.
5. Treat participants as members, not as clients, such that members understand they have power and can get things done and members can say, We are the organization.
6. Keep a consistent focus on leadership development. Bring people who are natural leaders into the organization and give them opportunities to develop their skills and reflect on their practice.
7. Translate big problems into specific, winnable issues (such as getting a fence around

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a playground or a crossing guard at a busy intersection).

8. Link specific education issues to broader community concerns. This way, members build credibility and power on small issues such that they can then sustain longer term, more difficult efforts on broader school reform issues.
9. Build an organizational staff that is accountable to its members. Develop the capacity for a paid staff, including organizers.
10. Create financial self-sufficiency through independent sources of funding. Money should come from members, such that the organization is accountable to its members not dependent on federal or foundation funding.

What LEFs Bring to Community Organizing

1. LEFs have access to power brokers, including the business community and school district superintendent and school boards.
2. LEFs have access to data and research that community groups generally don't have.
3. LEFs have expertise and connections with education schools at local universities. They know about programs in the national and local landscape of school reform that could address problems identified by community organizations.
4. LEF connections can lend credibility to organizing efforts that may be perceived as being outside the mainstream community.

THE RIGHT QUESTION PROJECT: HELPING PARENTS BECOME SELF-ADVOCATES

The Right Question Project (RQP) provides educational training and strategies to increase parental participation in the democratic process. It builds upon the strengths of people who have traditionally been disengaged from the key decisionmaking processes that affect them and their children's education. Right Question Project participants acquire concrete analytic and critical thinking skills that allow them to formulate their own questions, analyze how decisions are made and determine how they can have a voice in shaping those decisions.

The Paterson Education Fund (PEF) has tailored the general RQP training to build constituencies of parents and other community members. Participants come away from the training as self-advocates for good information about education concerns. In most PEF workshops, participants:

- Start with lead-in questions that get participants into a questioning mode: "What is my child learning?" and "What kinds of questions would you ask if you wanted to learn this information?"
- Create branches of 10 questions under a main question. For each of those 10 questions, create 10 new questions. This process of creating 100 questions helps participants get in the habit of asking questions and teaches them how to use questions to investigate a particular problem or area of concern.
- Learn the difference between closed (yes/no) questions and open-ended questions and when to use each.
- Build lists of action words that describe the ways they and others in the community can support, monitor and advocate for children's development.

For more information about PEF's approach to the Right Question Project and training offered for groups outside of New Jersey, see the group's Web site (www.paterson-education.org) or call 973-881-8914.

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RESOURCES *for* CONSTITUENCY BUILDING

Community Organizing for Urban School Reform

In his book, *Community Organizing for Urban School Reform*, Dennis Shirley uses a case-study approach to describe how working-class parents, public school teachers, clergy, social workers, business partners and other engaged citizens have worked to improve their public schools. All of these efforts use the political organizing methods and tools from the Industrial Areas Foundation.

How to get the resource: The book was published in 1997 by the University of Texas Press, Austin, and is available at local bookstores and libraries.

Community Coalitions Manual

Published by the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, this manual is a comprehensive guide for establishing and sustaining effective coalition-based programs. It covers volunteer recruitment, project planning, evaluation, fundraising and public relations, with contact information for more than 200 business, community service, education, equity, ethnic and political organizations nationwide.

How to get the resource: Call the AAUW sales office (800-225-9998 ext. 328) or order the book on the AAUW Web site.
www.aauw.org

Key Work of School Boards

The Key Work of School Boards, from the National School Boards Association, offers tools and information for improving school board members' leadership in raising student achievement.

How to get the resource: Log onto NSBA's Web site.
www.nsba.org/keywork

INTERVENTION

Engaging Practitioners

Engaging teachers, administrators and school and district staff members in public school improvement efforts is just as important as engaging community stakeholders external to the district. The people who work in and with schools are the ones who have the greatest effect on the day-to-day implementation of any public school reform strategy.

The opportunity to engage practitioners — usually through reflective conversations or quality professional development — is crucial to strengthening teaching and student learning. In some cases, local education funds provide professional development directly to practitioners. In other cases, LEFs broker school-community partnerships that provide practitioners with enriching tools and resources. Successful efforts to engage practitioners develop educators' *and* students' abilities to become responsible for their own continued learning.

For intermediary organizations, working directly with educators is the best way to build understanding of the work of schools and the capacities needed to put in place effective practices. This understanding is important for a local education fund's credibility both with educators and with the external community.

The following vignettes show how two local education funds approached the work and goals of this strategic intervention.

1. New Visions for Public Schools
   Academic Distinction Fund

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New Visions for Public Schools

Project FIRST

Challenge

To use technology effectively in classrooms, teachers need targeted professional development and technical support. There is no blanket approach to technology training; good technology training and support programs engage educators in defining what skills and assistance they need and help them develop teaching practices that improve student performance.

Strategic Intervention

In response to the significant technology training and support needs of communities faced with the "digital divide," New Visions for Public Schools in New York, along with eight other local education funds, worked in partnership with businesses to decrease the divide in a six-year project called Project Fostering Instructional Reform in Schools through Technology (FIRST). Nearly 300 AmeriCorps members provided some 350,000 hours of direct service in 400 schools.

Local education funds used Project FIRST initiatives to integrate technology into the life and learning process in disadvantaged schools. New Visions made a concerted effort to engage teachers and librarians throughout the school year in identifying real-time needs and preparing long-term plans for increased use of technology to support classroom instruction.

LEF Work

New Visions trained AmeriCorps members as Technology Coordinators (TCs) to work in schools for an entire school year, providing the training and support that individual teachers needed to integrate technology into their classrooms. Project FIRST training built the knowledge of practitioners so that they could confine and understand technology and use it after a TC's term was up.

Each school defined the program differently, based on what the teachers said they needed in terms of instructional strategies and assistance with technical issues.

Securing a strong commitment from school leadership and personnel was a fundamental first step in this process. "Effective technology planning cannot be done without the involvement and commitment of the school leadership and a representative population of the school community," says Kavita Singh, former Project FIRST program director at New Visions.

With this commitment and the knowledge of what teachers needed (based on a survey conducted at the beginning of the school year and on informal conversations with teachers throughout the year), TCs worked with teachers one-on-one and in small groups to orient them to the basics of computers, printers and software programs. Teachers learned what they needed to know to explore and learn more on their own. TCs also worked with students, helping them use technology to support their in-class learning and developing their skills so that they, too, could learn more on their own.

Results

Project FIRST increased schools' capacities to integrate technology into the curricula. Part of New Visions' strategy was to develop curriculum-based projects using technology with small groups of librarians, teachers and students. For instance, TCs modeled effective teaching practices that allowed a few students to work on a classroom computer while the rest of the class was working on other tasks. TCs also developed lessons and activities that used technology to build students' reading and writing skills.

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In addition, Project FIRST supported the development of school technology plans. TCs began the school year with a technology inventory, in which they searched the nooks and crannies of each school to identify its technology resources. Throughout the school year, TCs led conversations about existing technology resources, how best to use them, the school's plans for the future and how new technology would support those plans. These conversations were the basis for new school-based technology plans.

In New York and other cities, Project FIRST narrowed the digital divide in schools through real-time professional development that built upon the enthusiasm of a few teachers to build the skills and knowledge practitioners needed to sustain new levels of technology use.

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New Visions structured Project FIRST as a program that would engage practitioners throughout the school year and tailor professional development to individual school's and teacher's needs.

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demic Distinction Fund

Comprehensive School Health Initiative/ Children's Health Insurance Project

Challenge

Part of the challenge of a local comprehensive school health initiative is to create and sustain long-term changes in health education. Even in schools with health centers, teachers of all subject areas need additional support to integrate health topics into their daily lessons.

Strategy

The Academic Distinction Fund (ADF) in Baton Rouge, LA, concentrated efforts during its local comprehensive school health initiative on supporting teachers in the important work of integrating health education into core curriculum areas. ADF was successful because teachers at each school led health-education planning efforts, rather than someone outside the school doing so.

LEF Work

ADF and its partner organization, Health Care Centers in Schools, worked with two rural schools with new health centers to focus on health education as a complementary strategy to creating healthy, productive students. The participating schools, an elementary and a high school in the East Baton Rouge Parish school system, developed a model for bringing together school planning teams to integrate health education into the curriculum.

"The key to our success was getting someone on staff whom teachers knew and respected to lead the effort," recalls Jan Melton, executive director of ADF. The lead teachers helped faculty at their schools brainstorm health education ideas, develop school teams and bring in community partners who could provide resources and expertise. Each summer, the lead teachers worked with the school teams to plan the year's school health activities, develop a schoolwide health theme for every month and integrate health education activities into the teaching of math, science, reading and other core curriculum areas.

Before identifying these lead teachers, ADF brought in a community health worker to run the health education efforts at the two schools. Even after the community person spent months on the project, "when it came down to it, the teachers wouldn't call her, they would call us," says Melton. Not until one of their peers was leading the effort did teachers stop calling ADF and start working with their colleague to blend health education into their classrooms.

Melton cites one reason the lead teachers may have been successful where the community health worker was not: "Every profession speaks a different language. Teachers don't often speak the health language, and health folks don't often speak teachers' language," she says.

Results

The lead teachers essentially led true professional development efforts by providing a vehicle for teachers to share ideas for new lessons and align curricula. Teachers were more receptive to the process when they saw that the goal was not to add new work, but instead to help them with the planning that they would have, in the past, done alone. For teachers in these schools, this initiative was one of the first structured opportunities they had to plan together.

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As a result of the annual curriculum planning, numerous schoolwide health activities were developed at the two schools. Teachers continue to use and adapt these activities and lessons well after ADF stepped out of curriculum planning efforts.

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The key to success was having a school staff member lead the effort.

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LESSONS *for* ENGAGING PRACTITIONERS

Support professional development that directly relates to daily instruction. Professional development produces the greatest improvements in student learning when it gives teachers the real-time skills and knowledge they need to improve their daily instruction and assignments.

Involve practitioners in designing their own professional development. Allow teachers and school staff to shape programs and define activities in ways that are workable for them. Invite them to help define what kinds of reflection would be most helpful. In this way, practitioners are less likely to feel as if an agenda is being imposed on them and more likely see that the professional development relates to their everyday work.

Give practitioners the ability to build on their new skills. Teachers should feel empowered by their new skills and have sufficient knowledge to build upon them after the formal professional development is over.

for ENGAGING PRACTITIONERS

BUILDING PRACTITIONERS' TECHNOLOGY SKILLS: THREE STEPS FOR VOLUNTEER-LED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Step 1: Enter the school through an open door. Work with schools already working on change efforts or create the need for collaboration in schools that are interested. Secure a strong commitment from school leadership and personnel. Develop trusting relationships with teachers, administrators, librarians and students.

Step 2: Integrate technology into the life of the school. Merge technology into the curriculum and help teachers understand the creative potential of information technology across all subject areas. Know your audience; trainers, teachers and students may all need different kinds of up-front and ongoing training.

Step 3: Employ creative management skills to recruit and retain volunteers. Consider a systematic way to provide professional development and administrative support for volunteers. Provide time and space for the group of volunteers to collaborate and develop as a team. Recruit volunteers with an expressed interest in education and technology.

For the full discussion of each step, see *Technology in the Classroom* on the Publications section of PEN's Web site.
www.publiceducation.org/pubs

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SCHOOL HEALTH SURVEY

An important step in assessing the status of school health needs and services is to survey school staff. The following survey is an example of how to gather that information based the eight-component model of school health from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Only a portion of the sample survey is included here.

The entire survey is available on the Schools and Community section of PEN's Web site (www.publiceducation.org/health/tools/assessment.htm).

COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL HEALTH INVENTORY *For Faculty and Staff*

1. **Your Name** _____

2. **Your position/role:**

administrator	nurse
health educator	guidance, other social services support staff
physical educator	classroom teacher
health/physical educator	other _____

3. **Your school or office:**
   elementary middle school high school district administration

A. School Health Education:

How established are the following aspects of health education programs in your school?

	Don't Know				Well Established
4. A "vision" for school health education that is clearly stated, widely accepted and commonly shared.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Curriculum advisory committee with representation from health professionals, civic leaders, family members and students.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Teachers prepared to implement health education.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Curriculum that, overall, addresses a broad range of health content areas (including prevention of alcohol and other drug use, nutrition, family life education; mental and emotional health; environmental health; injury prevention and safety; personal health and fitness, disease prevention and control, including HIV/AIDS education, community health; and consumer health).	1	2	3	4	5

8. Specific curriculum that addresses:					
a. HIV/AIDS prevention	1	2	3	4	5
b. Pediatric Asthma prevention and treatment	1	2	3	4	5
c. Diabetes awareness prevention and treatment	1	2	3	4	5
d. Lead poisoning prevention and treatment	1	2	3	4	5
9. Curriculum that includes a focus on health skills development.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Classroom teachers integrate health topics in other subject areas on a regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Curriculum that is sequential and articulates with curricula from both the prior and following years.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Adequate time devoted to health instruction in your school.	1	2	3	4	5

B. School Environment:

Rate the extent to which your school has established policies and procedures for handling the following situations.

	Don' t Know				Well Established
13. Sale and possession of alcohol, tobacco and drugs	1	2	3	4	5
14. Alcohol and drug use	1	2	3	4	5
15. Possession of weapons	1	2	3	4	5
16. Tobacco use by students on campus	1	2	3	4	5
17. Tobacco use by staff on campus	1	2	3	4	5
18. Physical violence	1	2	3	4	5
19. Sexual behaviors, sexual harassment	1	2	3	4	5
20. Sexual assault	1	2	3	4	5
21. Universal precautions for handling blood and other body fluids	1	2	3	4	5

22. Emergencies requiring immediate action (e.g. fire, bomb scare, gang disruption, drug overdose, death/suicide)	1	2	3	4	5
23. Maintenance of the school's physical facilities to provide an adequately safe environment (i.e. water quality, air quality, no crumbling asbestos, lead-free paint, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
24. Establishing your school as a place where there is strong emphasis on promoting a healthful school environment (including fostering self-esteem, caring for and supporting students and staff, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere, displaying creative work of students, actively involving staff and students in health promotion efforts, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5

C. School Health Services:

How established are the following services in your school?

	Don't Know				Well Established
25. Maintenance of current health record for all enrolled students	1	2	3	4	5
26. Routine health screening (vision, hearing, dental)	1	2	3	4	5
27. Emergency care for injury and sudden illness	1	2	3	4	5
28. General physical and mental health and dental care (e.g. school-linked clinic)	1	2	3	4	5
29. Provides in-service for teachers and staff to help them identify, refer and manage students with special health needs	1	2	3	4	5

RESOURCES *for* ENGAGING PRACTITIONERS

Achieving Healthy Schools: A Guide for School-Based Teams in Planning Comprehensive School Health Programs

This toolkit guides school teams through the process of planning for comprehensive school health, with questionnaires to assess assets and needs, inventories of a school community's capacity in the area of school health and examples of models for bringing health services into a school. The toolkit is published by the Public Education Fund in Providence, RI.

How to get the resource: Log onto the Public Education Fund's Web site or call PEF at 410-454-1050.
www.ri.net/PEF/orderform-achieving.htm

Project FIRST

The Project FIRST Web site captures many of the important lessons learned throughout the six-year initiative. Learn how the participating sites put technology to work in the context of other school reform goals. And find online resources in five key areas:

- Training teachers to use technology
- Selecting hardware and software for classroom use
- Navigating the Web for instructional resources
- Evaluating your technology needs
- Involving your community

How to get the resource: Log onto www.publiceducation.org/projectfirst

INTERVENTION

Collaboration with Districts

Collaborative efforts between local education funds and school districts have the most potential for sustainable change. Being a full partner with a school district means LEFs commit to sharing the work of and responsibility for implementing broad school reform strategies. Such partnering also requires that the LEF invite the district to be a constructive critic of its work at the same time the LEF is a supportive ally of the district.

When reform is implemented just school-by-school — without a concerted effort on building systemic change — the reform isn't sustainable. Not until there are changes in district-level policies, reconfigurations in staffing and public statements of support will the reforms take root as long-term change. Just as state policy can help or hinder possibilities at the local district level, so can district-level policy affect practices at the school level. LEFs need to maximize leverage points for district-level change.

Local education funds have collaborated with districts as support providers, critical friends and advocacy allies. Some LEFs work with their school districts to identify, plan for and implement whole-school reform models that support changes in school-level teaching and learning and district-level support structures. LEFs also work with school districts to develop academic standards and build the necessary knowledge and commitment among parents, community members and educators to accelerate the implementation of standards.

Often while collaborating with districts, local education funds face a tension between being a service provider or funder and being an external change agent for public schools. Many LEFs work directly with schools or teachers in the delivery of professional development or by granting money for innovative classroom work. As a result, LEFs gain credibility as knowledgeable education advocates, but they may also risk their neutrality as an external critical friend of the district.

The following vignettes show how two local education funds approached the work and goals of this strategic intervention.

Lincoln Public Schools **Foundation**

Fund for Educational Excellence

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Lincoln Public Schools Foundation

Library Power

Challenge

Education in the 21st century demands that curriculum be integrated with library and media resources. In the past, libraries and the people who worked in them have been underutilized and often separated from the rest of the school. To move from viewing libraries as isolated sources of materials to centers of learning that support classrooms throughout a school requires that entire districts reformulate how they approach school libraries and support librarians and media specialists.

Strategic Intervention

The Lincoln Public Schools Foundation (LPSF), in collaboration with the Lincoln Public Schools, used the Library Power initiative to reposition libraries as learning and media centers in all of the district's schools. Library Power has enabled 700 schools to revitalize libraries and train teachers and librarians to integrate high-quality information resources into instructional activities.

LEF Work

Library Power began as an initiative of the Lincoln Public Schools Foundation, but after several years of intense cooperation between the local education fund and the district, Library Power is now an essential part of the school system. Collaboration was the key to ensuring that Library Power wasn't just an add-on program, but instead was a way to assist the school district in curriculum planning and professional development. As a result, all school libraries in Lincoln are rich centers of learning with an array of resources to enhance classroom learning.

"From the beginning," says Barbara Bartle, executive director of LPSF, "the program was designed with sustainability in the picture." The LEF provided staff support to get the Library Power initiative started in schools and integrated into the district's school-improvement process. The additional help enabled the district to sustain the program.

The local education fund also helped to maintain Library Power as a fluid response to schools' needs. The cooperation among the local education fund, the district and schools allowed all partners to address needs throughout the lifetime of the project. For the district, Library Power was not an add-on; instead, it was an integral part of the school district's mission and activities. This fluidity and integrated nature of Library Power was what sustained the change created by the program.

LPSF has applied lessons learned during Library Power to its current activities. Now, when the local education fund makes grants, it requires collaborative efforts. Winning projects must involve parents and community members and must show partnering within a school or with other schools.

Bartle explains that, ultimately, the knowledge and credibility the LEF gained by working with the district helped the local education fund become a better neutral convener in the community around important school reform efforts.

Several factors contributed to the local education fund's success in working with the school district through Library Power. LPSF built positive connections among individual schools, the school district and the Library Power coordinator through school-based and districtwide Library Power committees. In addition, the "Study, Implement and Maintenance" cycle that LPSF introduced with Library Power was adopted for district curriculum and programs planning.

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Library Power provided a productive and successful approach to professional development, in which teachers help to define the support they need and participate in decisions about the use of media and technology in their schools.

Although it's not possible to tie student achievement data directly to the program, data gathered during the life of Library Power shows positive gains in student achievement. With Library Power and other systemic reforms, test scores in Lincoln have steadily increased, even in the schools that traditionally had the lowest scores.

Across Library Power sites nationwide, evaluators have found that teachers in Library Power schools were able to include assignments that enable students to strengthen their literacy skills. As well, students began to read more and use the library on their own initiative once they had access to higher quality literature.

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The collaborative process between the Lincoln Public Schools Foundation, the district and schools allowed all partners to address schools' needs throughout the life of the project.

Fund for Educational Excellence

Helping Every Child Achieve

Challenge

In Baltimore, a city plagued by low achievement and a state takeover of city schools, the Fund for Educational Excellence (FFEE) designed a whole-school reform effort that would support a rigorous system of standards and accountability. This reform effort was designed to be used by the district and individual schools to change the ways teachers delivered instruction, the ways principals led their schools and the ways in which the district focused time and resources in schools.

Strategic Intervention

From its start, FFEE designed Achievement First to be a full partnership with the Baltimore City school system. The whole-school change design focuses on improving student achievement and directly supports the city's and state's standards and accountability agenda.

LEF Work

A research-based whole-school change initiative modeled after successful reform efforts in New York City and Boston, Achievement First was designed with explicit systemwide goals: build sustained improvement in one content area — literacy — over several years, create deliberate professional development in schools focused on curriculum and instruction and focus the principalship on instructional leadership, rather than management.

In its implementation, all Achievement First schools have five "essentials": (1) schools focus on literacy; (2) principals develop as instructional leaders; (3) standards and student work inform instructional strategies; (4) on-site professional development opportunities improve instructional quality and (5) family-community partnerships reinforce classroom instruction.

Three years after its inception, FFEE can point to important districtwide changes as a result of the program. It expanded from 10 to 39 schools in three years. The chief academic officer is committed to promoting instructional leadership, and the district protects the block of time devoted to literacy every day in Achievement First schools.

FFEE has built this collaboration with the school system through two key strategies: engaging the district throughout the progression of Achievement First and providing successful methods for improving student achievement.

The LEF consistently communicated with the district. "We've approached all of our meetings with key people in the system with the question, How can you help us improve what we're doing in your schools?" says Jennifer Economos Green, program officer at FFEE.

In addition to keeping the district abreast of its activities and seeking input, FFEE has also been open about the problems. "This kind of open, collaborative communication has helped district leaders feel ownership for Achievement First," says Green.

The willingness of schools and the district to collaborate with FFEE is due, in large part, to high-quality work that has produced significant gains in student achievement. Among the pieces of this work are several focused professional development activities for principals and teachers.

For example, the local education fund designed a unique professional development opportunity for principals: "walkthroughs," in which a group of principals visited a different school each month. During the visit, principals spend 90 minutes in classrooms and 90 minutes in content-area training and discussion of what they saw. In addition, as a part of its participation in PEN's Helping Every Child

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Achieve initiative, FFEE began training teachers and parents to use the Standards in Practice model of looking at student work. This model helps teachers and families evaluate assignments and student progress toward meeting standards.

The school system sees Achievement First as high-quality work in its schools not only because it directly supports the state and school system's reform agenda but also because students in Achievement First schools outperform their counterparts in schools that do not take part. In the fall of 2001, an independent evaluator found that the "initiative is having notable effects on schoolwide reading achievement gains and on students' learning of basic and advanced literacy skills."

Among the impressive set of changes in educators' practice in Achievement First schools are the following:

- Every elementary school dedicates a block of 120-180 minutes a day to literacy.
- Every principal spends 90 minutes a day in the classroom.
- Teachers regularly meet in teams to assess the quality of their own assignments.
- Professional developers provide on-site expert support for literacy instruction.

FFEE is now focused on sustaining these changes by deepening its collaboration with the district. The local education fund is encouraging assistant superintendents to provide the same focused instructional support for principals as in the past three years. In addition, the LEF is working with the assistant superintendent of one of the city's sub-districts — created to pilot key reforms — to identify systemwide policies that need to be changed to support instruction.

"It doesn't matter how good the work is, it won't continue if systemwide changes aren't made," says Green.

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The Fund for Educational Excellence built a whole-school reform effort with the district through two ongoing strategies: engaging the district and providing successful approaches to improving student achievement.

LESSONS *for* COLLABORATION *with districts*

Start with the end in mind. Even if a reform effort starts in only a few schools, define goals for district-level change from the outset. Design the work in individual schools to mirror the changes you see at the system level. Only through district buy-in will schools continue to benefit from the collaboration over time, beyond the LEF's involvement.

Remain in constant communication with the school district. Collaborative efforts with school districts are stronger when LEFs keep open lines of communication, seek ongoing feedback from teachers and administrators, talk openly about challenges and share credit for successes.

Approach the effort as a long-term endeavor. Collaboration takes time, and sustainable collaborative efforts require long-term commitments from the LEF, the district and schools.

Celebrate success. Celebrations and recognition are important for those who are on the front lines. Celebrations can also cultivate important visibility and support for a collaborative program across the school system and in the community.

Target the risk-takers. About 15 percent to 20 percent of school leaders are risk-takers; look to them first to gain early successes for a new idea or innovative change in practice.

Learn to trust one another. Collaboration requires trust; cultivate a trustworthy partnership by creating early "wins" and being true to your word. Don't promise more than you can deliver.

for COLLABORATION *with districts*

OVERCOMING TURF ISSUES

Turf issues are bound to surface when people who have different training and experience come together for the first time in a collaborative effort. Add to this the inherent power shift that occurs in a school-community partnership — away from the school board and principal alone and toward a shared partnership with community agencies and parents — and the potential for bruised egos and crossed signals can be great. In many ways, the initial relationship can take on the characteristics of an arranged marriage. It may take some time to resolve or work through the initial problems, but with foresight and realistic planning, most of these issues can be resolved early on.

Issues To Confront in the Early Stages of Collaboration

Conflicting Work Styles. Every profession has a standard by which they are accustomed to work-

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ing. When teachers come together with social workers or other health professionals, the difference in work styles may cause some initial turbulence. Even simple things, like a preference for communicating orally rather than in writing, can get in the way of collaboration unless conscious efforts are made to put the partnership first.

Speaking different "languages." Even when everyone is speaking English, there can be language barriers among the mix of laypeople and professionals from many different disciplines. Terms that have very clear meanings to some may come across as empty expressions to others. For effective communication to take place, the team will have to break down these barriers and develop a new, common language.

Priorities. School-community collaborations bring people with different expertise together to work as a team for children and families. But these groups will naturally have their own distinct priorities, rooted in their philosophy, training and personal history. If priorities conflict too much, a sense of competition can easily develop between team members. The benefits of the partnership have to be greater than the fear of identity loss and shifts in agendas. A consensus on common priorities, in the form of a vision statement, can help clarify the outcomes every partner wants for children and schools in the community.

Partner vs. tenant. If social service agencies or other professionals external to the school are viewed as tenants in the building rather than integral members of the school team, many of the objectives of a collaborative partnership will be difficult to accomplish. From the outset, everyone involved in making the partnership work should be clear on the design of the program and the rationale for its integrated connection with the school.

Credentials. Not all partners — especially parents or grassroots participants — will have credentials that reflect advanced degrees or training, but their understanding of the community and personal concern for its children are valuable. On the other hand, residents with strong ties to the community may be suspicious of professionals who seem disconnected from the realities of the neighborhood. Even among some professional fields, there may be some biases to overcome. For the partnership to succeed, members have to come to recognize and respect the strength that comes from each partner's personal experience and from the collective experience of the team.

This tool was adapted from "Building A Community School" (Revised Edition, 1997), published by the Children's Aid Society. For copies, call The Children's Aid Society National Technical Assistance Center at 212-569-2866.

BUILDING COALITIONS FOR IMPROVED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development is essential to improving the practice of teaching. It is also an important vehicle for building a community of learners within schools and districts. Direct skill development, coaching, consultation and networking all support the collaboration of teachers, principals and community-based organizations.

But schools often cannot provide the best professional development on their own. The experience of 20 local education funds participating in the national Library Power program offers lessons for building partnerships that strengthen collaboration and improve the practice of teaching and learning. These lessons follow.

Build coalitions within the school district. School districts offer many reform efforts, which often operate in isolation from each

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for COLLABORATION *with districts*

CONTINUED

other. Coalitions of people and initiatives with like objectives, however, are more likely to combine knowledge and resources to produce more effective reform efforts. Specifically, summer professional development workshops or institutes might be created to blend compatible approaches to adult learning. Materials developed across departments or initiatives can increase opportunities for collaboration in schools.

Build partnerships with media. Organizations specializing in communications — newspapers, radio and television stations — are natural partners for providing professional development for schools. In many cities, local newspapers help teachers use a daily paper as a teaching tool in the classroom, and public television stations create special shows or training videos that can help spur collaboration and research.

Build partnerships with local cultural organizations. Many local arts associations, historical societies and museums are committed to providing interdisciplinary learning and authentic research opportunities for educators. Teaming up with these organizations can enrich professional development opportunities at little or no cost to the school or district. Sometimes, these organizations work with teachers to develop extensive, age-appropriate materials directly tied to the curriculum.

Build partnerships with colleges and universities. Professors of education are often eager to share research findings concerning student-centered learning and resource-based teaching with educators. Often, professors will facilitate workshops, institutes and continuing education programs. In addition, they are often willing to discuss cutting-edge electronic research strategies that may be useful to students.

Build partnerships with public libraries. Public libraries are obvious partners for developing strategies to address students' learning needs. Public libraries may fund joint professional development to do the following:

- Discuss grade-level curriculum and develop complementary materials and activities
- Share calendars to develop strategies for supporting students during periods of intense library use, such as the weeks before science and history fairs
- Create summer reading lists
- Learn new research strategies using electronic media
- Identify underserved populations (new immigrant families, homeless children, students with disabilities) and develop outreach strategies to ensure they receive needed services

Build partnerships with businesses. Businesses in each community have special expertise that can enrich professional development for teachers. For instance, telecommunications and computer industries can provide training in new technologies and expand teachers' capabilities in gaining access to information through the Internet. (The Lincoln Public Schools Foundation found business partners willing to underwrite technology training for 600 teachers.) Human relations departments of large corporations can provide training in team building and help schools reflect on the change process in the context of their organizations.

These strategies were derived from The Information-Powered School *(2001), published by the Public Education Network and American Association of School Librarians and edited by Sandra Hughes and Anne Wheelock (pp. 27-29). To order the book, call the American Library Association at 800-545-2433.*

RESOURCES *for* COLLABORATION *with districts*

Library Power

The Library Power Web site is full of information about the program, school success stories and links to resources for improving library and media programs.

How to get the resource: Log onto the Web site. www.librarypower.org

School Walkthroughs for Principals

PEN's online Standards Toolkit features a how-to explanation of a unique kind of professional development created by the Fund for Educational Excellence and focused on instruction and peer coaching. The tool offers information about organizing a walkthrough (or school visit) and a downloadable worksheet for principals to use during a walkthrough.

How to get the resource: Visit PEN's online Standards Toolkit in the Standards & Accountability initiative section. www.publiceducation.org/standards/tools/balt_walk.htm

Standards In Practice

The Fund for Educational Excellence uses Standards in Practice, a model of looking at student work and teacher assignments, as a main component of collaboration with the school district and parents.

How to get the resource: For more information about Standards in Practice, log onto the Education Trust's Web site. www.edtrust.org/main/sip.asp

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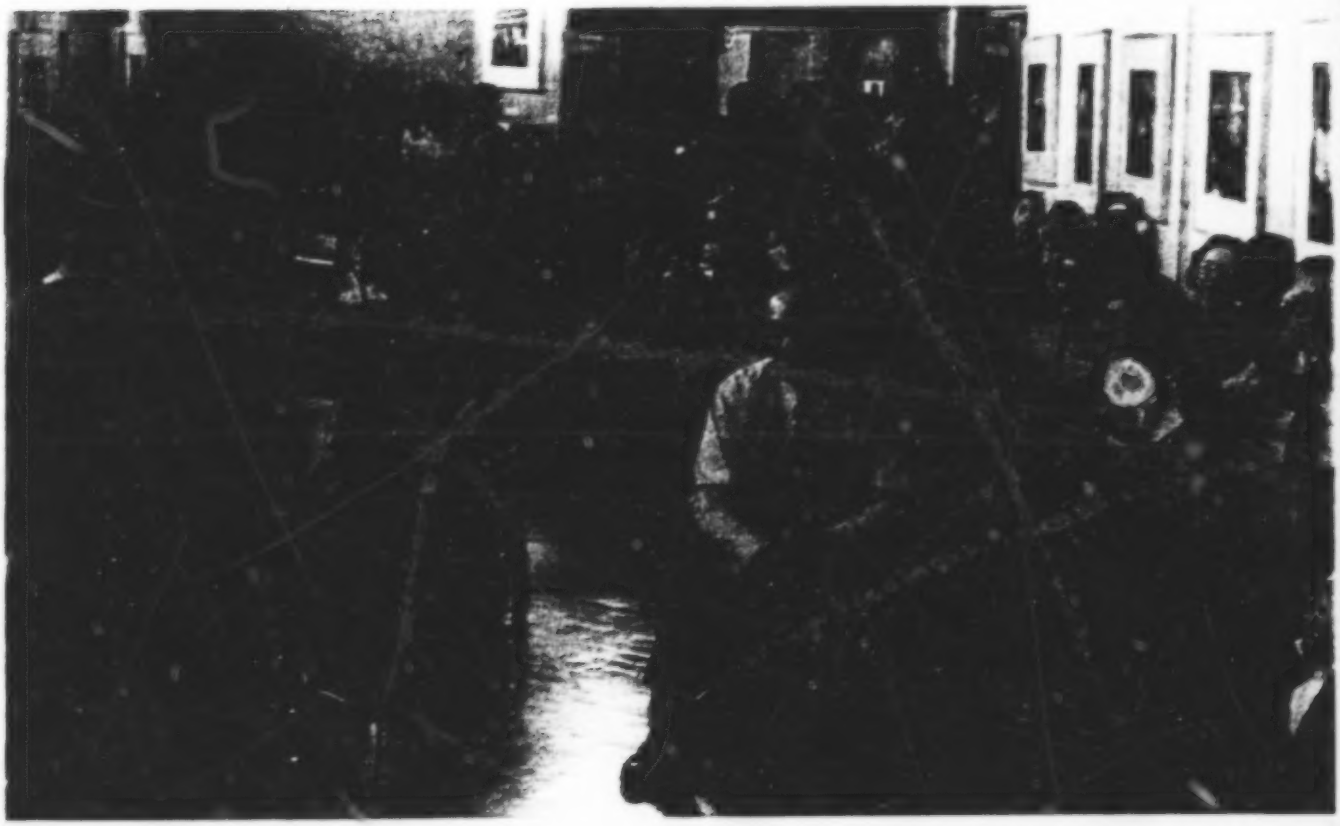
When reform is implemented just school-by-school — without a concerted effort to build systemic change — the reform isn't sustainable.



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INTERVENTION

Policy Analysis & Agenda Development

Some local education funds are finding that their attempts to bring about reforms at the local school or district level is limited unless policies are put in place to support or create changes in teaching and learning. New policies may need to be enacted or existing policies may need to be used more effectively and creatively as levers for change. It is also important that people in schools and others in the community understand these policies, their tangible effects on teaching and learning and, when necessary, the urgency for change.

Developing a policy agenda requires an investigation into factors that influence the quality of teaching and learning to determine what is effective and ineffective about existing policies. The key to this agenda development is basing policies on good teaching and learning practices that demonstrate improvements in student achievement.

To move a completed analysis into a broadly supported agenda for change, local education funds develop easy-to-understand presentations of the data and make clear arguments for policy agendas to the public and policymakers. LEFs also work directly with policymakers to accelerate the process of addressing issues raised by policy analysis. Wide circulation of the results of data gathering can help accelerate action on a new or revised policy agenda.

The following vignettes show how two local
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- Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Found
- Philadelphia Education Fund

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Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation

School Finance Initiative

Summary

Because school budgets are often complex, obscure and inaccessible, local education funds play an important role in interpreting and making public school budgets, as one piece of the school district's policy agenda. LEF efforts to analyze school budgets and present accurate, easy-to-understand information is an important piece in engaging a community in developing and monitoring local education policies.

Background

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation (CMEF), in Charlotte, NC, embarked on a yearlong effort to increase the community understanding of the school district's budget and change overall expectations for how money was allocated. In the process of creating a *Community Guide to the School Budget*, CMEF engaged a broad cross-section of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community in the issues of school funding. This public engagement played a critical role in the school board's changing school funding policies to provide more money to high-need areas.

LEF Work

In its annual community assessment, CMEF has surveyed all registered voters on their perceptions of local schools and education and on their top areas of concern. In 1996, the assessment showed that voters didn't trust the school system's information on how school funds were spent. As a result, the local education fund took on the work of providing the community with reliable information on school funding as a vehicle for addressing school finance.

CMEF's work to analyze school finance policy and influence future district policy and finance agendas fell into three steps.

The first step was to bring together a steering committee with diverse representatives from the community: finance experts, attorneys, employers, parents, educators and representatives of community-based organizations. This committee was charged with conducting an independent analysis of local school finance data. Simultaneous to the committee's work, CMEF conducted focus groups of citizens, parents and nonparents alike, to obtain more specific information about community questions and concerns regarding school finance.

Ultimately, the local education fund published a *Community Guide to the School Budget* based on the findings of the steering committee and the input from citizens. Because of the wide range of community members involved, the guide was well-respected.

"The community believed it was getting the straight answer on school finance," says Corrine Allen, former executive director of CMEF.

The second step was to distribute the guide widely: on the LEF's Web site, at its annual meeting, through the school district, through local employers and at public libraries. The local education fund highlighted the new information on school finance in catchy newspaper and poster advertisements that used the question, "What does all that money in the school budget pay for?" and provided quick facts to answer it.

"These ads drew attention to the wealth of information in the guide and urged citizens to

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get involved in decisions about the district's budget," recalls Allen.

The final step was to help focus the school board on the issues raised in the guide. Namely, CMEF made specific recommendations for areas that deserved additional funding to ensure quality education for all students. Because school board members viewed CMEF as an independent, credible entity with no hidden agenda, they were receptive to its recommendations.

As a result of the school finance initiative, local school funding has been reconfigured to meet the needs of schools and children who weren't previously receiving adequate resources. "To this day, the school board, community and district recognize the importance of sound information about the school budget and the importance of citizen participation in the process," says Allen.

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Because school board members viewed the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation as an independent entity with no hidden agenda, they were receptive to its funding recommendations to ensure quality education for all students.

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Philadelphia Education Fund

OERI Teacher Quality

Challenge

Philadelphia, like many other urban areas nationwide, has a serious problem attracting and retaining qualified teachers. Developing a policy agenda that would remedy this problem requires considerable research into issues affecting teacher quality and retention.

Strategic Intervention

In PEN's OERI Teacher Quality initiative, the Philadelphia Education Fund (PEF) studied the state of teacher quality in the city, developed a policy agenda based on the findings and moved that agenda into the public arena through reporting and advocacy.

According to state law, the two largest cities in Pennsylvania had the option of requiring all school employees to live within the city limits. Both Philadelphia and Pittsburgh had enacted such a rule. PEF focused strongly on repealing this teacher residency requirement.

LEF Work

The residency requirement was one of the 10 options for policy change that came out of PEF's yearlong study of teacher quality in Philadelphia. PEF gathered data about the teacher turnover rate and the percentages of uncertified teachers. PEF then compared the teacher characteristics with achievement data and mapped this information according to school location in low- or high-income areas.

From among the several policies that PEF recommended be changed, the local education fund chose to focus its attention on the residency requirement.

Over several years, PEF had been collecting data about teacher quality and retention. Through surveys and interviews of teachers, particularly, PEF researchers were cued into the effect of the residency requirement on teachers' willingness to accept teaching positions or continue teaching in Philadelphia schools.

Except for the local teachers' union, PEF was the only group in the city to voice a strong opposition to the residency requirement. "So many people who thought the requirement was detrimental for kids were discouraged by the common wisdom in the city that the rule was so entrenched that there was no hope of changing it," says Elizabeth Useem, research director at PEF.

The LEF took this stand first through a short memo written by Useem that summarized the evidence on the detrimental effects of the residency requirement. A second, more formal report to the community, released a few months later, presented the data in easy-to-understand terms. It included graphical representations of the data and definitive conclusions about the state of teacher quality and its effect on student achievement in Philadelphia. These reports were circulated to local and state policymakers, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* cited PEF's data and conclusions in an editorial.

"The urgency of the case won the day. We could show that there was a worsening of the situation — with data on teacher turnover and percentage of emergency credentialed teachers — in the past couple of years," Useem reflects.

PEF staff and colleagues at Temple University worked directly with the Pennsylvania General Assembly while it was voting on a bill calling for repeal of the residency requirement for teachers in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. PEF used personal contact and the easy-to-read reports to inform legislators that the requirement was dampening recruitment efforts and making it more difficult to retain teachers. PEF's information supported and explained what lawmakers were hearing from their constituents on the issue.

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In June 2001, the Pennsylvania General Assembly repealed the Philadelphia and Pittsburgh teacher residency requirements. As a result of the repeal and of other efforts to fill city classrooms with more qualified teachers, there were 185 fewer teacher vacancies at the same time in 2001 as in 2000. PEF's policy and data analysis were effective agents for change when coupled with engagement and advocacy efforts.

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The Philadelphia Education Fund used easy-to-read reports and personal contact to inform legislators that a state law requiring Philadelphia teachers to live within the city limits was dampening recruitment efforts and making it more difficult to retain teachers.

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LESSONS *for* POLICY & AGENDA *Analysis* *Development*

Collect many forms of data and track issues over time.

Make connections between current policy and outcomes for students and teachers. Evidence of the ways in which specific policies influence teaching and learning helps people to see the real and tangible effects of policy decisions. This evidence is often a powerful argument for change.

Collect many forms of data and track issues over time. Broaden the definition of data to include interviews with teachers and school and district staff. Look for trends in the data: common themes that appear often over time can signal a significant problem or issue.

Develop strategic partnerships. Connect with groups in the community who have the skills to analyze data and scrutinize policy. Look to local university partners; they are often interested in data from schools and districts and enjoy being part of policy analysis. (Though, rightly, they sometimes expect to be paid.) Look for partners who understand the urgency of the issues and who are committed to getting work done in useful ways.

Be a neutral analyst. Demonstrate that your data or policy analysis project doesn't have a hidden agenda; tap into a community representative who can help produce independent and credible information.

Ensure that your data is above reproach. Indicate from the start how you will be sharing this data and then do so, regardless of whether the data show what you had hoped. Maintain the integrity of your findings.

for POLICY & AGENDA *Analysis* *Development*

DATA-COLLECTION FRAMEWORKS

PEN has developed data-collection frameworks as comprehensive tools for investigating the local factors that affect specific school reform in three areas: teacher quality, standards and accountability and school-community partnerships.

These comprehensive data frameworks are intended to guide communities through the process of collecting baseline information that will inform an analysis of current policy and practice. The data collection is not an end in itself; it is an opportunity to engage a community in the process of looking at the quality of local schools and the ways in which new policies and practices can support improvements.

Teacher Quality Data Framework

This framework takes five different "views" of teacher quality:

1. **The Big Picture:** What are the characteristics of teachers in the area as a whole?
2. **Distribution:** How are these characteristics distributed to different kinds of schools?

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3. **Flow:** What are the characteristics of teachers entering and leaving the system?
4. **Structure and Process:** How do policies and practices affect the other three views?
5. **Community:** What impact do actors beyond the schools such as higher education institutions, businesses, community organizations and parents have on teaching quality?

Within each view, the framework lays out a set of guiding questions that a community should seek to answer about its own district. The data gathered for views one, two and three are intended to determine what needs to be changed, and data gathered for views four and five may be helpful in considering possible avenues of change.

The full framework is available on the Teacher Quality section of PEN's Web site. www.publiceducation.org/tq/sites/framework.htm

Opportunities-to-Learn Framework

PEN has outlined a framework of resources and supports that children need to succeed academically. These areas are based on opportunity-to-learn standards or conditions of quality of education.

This framework considers five opportunities to learn:

1. Every child enters school ready to learn.
2. Every child has access to a rich curriculum aligned to standards.
3. Every child has high-quality instruction.
4. Every child is in a school environment conducive to learning.
5. Every child has access to community services that support and enhance learning.

The specific areas for investigation in each category and additional opportunity-to-learn frameworks are available on the Standards and Accountability section of PEN's Web site. www.publiceducation.org/standards/tools/otl.htm

Designing school-community partnerships that provide integrated, seamless services for children and families requires that communities assess existing partnerships, gaps in programs and services, barriers to creating partnerships and successful models. PEN's Community Assessment Framework helps communities do this kind of assessment.

The framework organizes data into the five core areas of comprehensive, coordinated partnerships that build child, youth and family-friendly communities:

1. Quality Education
2. Family Supports
3. Child and Youth Development
4. Family and Community Engagement
5. Community Development

In a four-step process, the framework guides community-based organizations through a process of making sense of what is known, outlining strategies to address barriers and gaps and planning a community approach to meet the needs of children and families. The following four steps are conducted for each of the five core areas above:

- Getting clear on the four to five indicators of comprehensive services in each core area
- Organizing baseline data (in numerical and narrative form) that provide evidence of successful models or gaps in services
- Making sense of the data to create an overall assessment of where the community is in terms of achieving the indicators in the core area
- Developing strategies for improvement that can be the initial steps of a community-wide strategic plan

The Schools and Community section of PEN's Web site provides a full explanation of the five core areas and the set of indicators and measures for each. www.publiceducation.org/health/tools/dataframework.htm

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RESOURCES *for* POLICY *Analysis* & AGENDA *Development*

Teacher Staffing in the School District of Philadelphia: A Report to the Community

The Philadelphia Education Fund released this report in May 2001 as a compilation of a comprehensive data analysis of teacher quality in Philadelphia. The report, which makes the data easy to understand with charts, graphs and clear statements about what they mean, was instrumental in the local education fund's efforts to repeal the residency requirement for school staff in Pennsylvania.

How to get the resource: Download the report from the Teacher Quality Publications section of the Fund's Web site.
www.philaedfund.org/pubs-pubsbyarea.htm#tq

All for All: Teacher Excellence for Every Child

The Wake Task Force on Teacher Excellence, with representatives from the business, university and educational communities, assessed the local factors affecting teacher professionalism and effectiveness in Wake County, NC. *All for All* reports on the task force's findings and its recommendations for addressing teacher qualifications as a way to improve student performance.

How to get the resource: The full report is available on the WakeEducates.org Web site.
www.wakeeducates.org/teacher

Community Guide to the School District Budget

The Metropolitan Nashville Public Education Foundation published a community guide to the school district's budget on the Web. With 11 easy-to-understand sections, the online report outlines where the district's money comes from, the full budget broken down by category, cost estimates of long-term spending on new and renovated schools, why the funding issue is urgent and what citizens can do.

How to get the resource: View the report on the Foundation's Web site.
www.telalink.net/~mnpef/cent~

The key to agenda development is basing policies on practices that demonstrate improvements in student achievement.

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INTERVENTION

Legal Strategies

Legal strategies can be an effective way to fight for the resources and regulations necessary to create school finance and accountability systems that provide adequate, high-quality education for all students, especially the disadvantaged.

Most school finance cases are brought on behalf of children, parents or school districts in areas where taxable wealth per pupil is below the state average and among the lowest in the state. Generally, these cases contend that the state school finance system is unconstitutional because it does not address the educational inequities resulting from great disparities in tax bases among the state's school districts. Often, the issue is not simply that spending is unequal, but that, as a result of unequal spending, children in the lowest-spending districts receive an inadequate education.

Legal action is typically seen only as a reactive or defensive mechanism for egregious inequities in public education. But the kind of legal strategies highlighted in this guide are proactive educational and advocacy tools intended to expand community involvement in legal action. Although local education funds may not be directly involved in bringing forward the litigation or arguing it at a state level, they play an important role in creating grassroots support for the urgency of legal action and involvement in shaping its outcome.

Community engagement efforts focused on school reform litigation can serve two purposes:

1. To educate a broader audience about the reasons for the litigation and build a constituency that will bring a grassroots demand for court action.
2. To involve citizens and stakeholder groups in setting the agenda for the litigation and defining the outcomes of pending court decisions, so that outcomes are responsive and agreed upon by the people who will be affected by them.

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Community-Based Involvement in Legal Strategies

The Alliance is pushing people to think about systemic inadequacies at the state and local levels

Challenge

Statewide school finance systems often don't compensate for uneven tax bases in the state or resulting inequalities among school districts in funding local schools. Although litigation challenging the constitutionality of school finance systems may have successful outcomes in the courts, creating real change in the adequacy and equality of education for students in low-income districts is more complicated. Public engagement and community-based advocacy are essential to school finance litigation to produce results for poor children.

Strategic Intervention

Community-based legal strategies recognize that educators, school systems, local and state policymakers, community stakeholders and the public all have a role and responsibility in ensuring that inequitable systems are changed, and that new systems, mandated by successful lawsuits, are fully and fairly implemented.

Role of Local Education Funds and Other Community-Based Organizations

"It's not enough to have a legal remedy [for school finance]. It takes real public engagement to get to real solutions," warns Sonia Hernandez, president and CEO of the Los Angeles County Alliance for Student Achievement. The Alliance, a new member of the Public Education Network, is a key player in the effort to promote and develop testimony for *Williams* v. *State of California*, an example of recent school finance litigation.

The Alliance and other LEFs and community-based organizations using litigation as a strategy for more fair systems of school finance all bring a unique perspective to the table: They seek to broaden the discussion, organize a strong constituency and engage the public.

The Alliance contends that the discussion about whether the state is providing enough resources must also focus on *how* the state allocates existing money for schools and *how* districts are using the money they have. In this way, the Alliance is pushing people to think about systemic inadequacies at the state and local levels. "If we don't ask these kinds of questions now, then how can we be sure that new money, when and if it comes as a result of the lawsuit, will get to the kids who need it?" asks Hernandez.

When it was filed, *Williams* included 18 school districts as plaintiffs. The Alliance is aiming to organize a larger constituency for the lawsuit by getting 500 of the 1,000 school districts in California to be a part of the suit.

"The landmark *Brown* v. *Board of Education* decision was handed down in 1954," says Hernandez. "But, since we're still fighting the same battle almost 50 years later, we know that we have to involve the public and school systems in these legal efforts."

A strong public understanding of the issues and outcomes of school finance litigation were also important elements in the school finance litigation in New York and New Jersey. In both states, community-based organizations used a school finance lawsuit as a lever to build public knowledge, support and demand for specific strategies that reduce huge disparities in educational quality.

During its seven-year equ lawsuit, the Campaign for Fiscal Equity (CFE) engaged citizens and advocates in New York City, wealthy suburbs and other parts of the state to help

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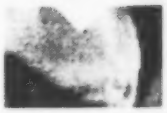
develop a definition of "sound, basic education." This citizen-created definition helped to assure the court that a potentially favorable decision in *Campaign for Fiscal Equity, Inc. v. State of New York* would be supported by the public, and the public would hold the state accountable for implementing it.

In January 2001, the New York State Supreme Court ordered the state to devise a new cost-based school finance system to ensure a sound, basic education for all students and an effective accountability system to ensure that resources are best used in providing that education. In partnership with the League of Women Voters, CFE continues roundtable discussions to enlist New Yorkers' help in crafting the court-ordered accountability system.

The Paterson Education Fund (PEF) is working to educate communities across New Jersey about the school finance requirements mandated by the New Jersey Supreme Court in the 1998 *Abbott v. Burke* decision. The court ruled that educational conditions for urban students, are "tragically inadequate" and "severely inferior" and prescribed a series of necessary reforms, including early-childhood education, alternative schools and full accountability programs.

To make these reforms happen, PEF is leading a statewide effort of community-based organizations to create demand for full implementation of the court-mandated remedies at the state level.

In Paterson, PEF has been consistently raising the question, 'If *Abbott* is the law, where is the money?' In plain language, PEF demonstrates the troubling picture of how resources for the local school district are still lagging behind what the court ordered. With local and statewide efforts, PEF, its partners and the public are working to hold the state accountable for increased funding for New Jersey's poorest districts.



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It's not enough to have a legal remedy for school finance. It takes real public engagement to get to real solutions.

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LESSONS *for* USING LEGAL STRATEGIES

LEFs have unique capacities to make the case for educational equity in legal efforts.

Be proactive. Engage the community in helping to define solutions to the problems raised by school reform litigation.

Get into the game early. It's important for local education funds to get involved even before a lawsuit is filed. Being involved from the ground up provides the opportunity to help shape the legal case and the court's directives about how a new finance system would be implemented.

Bring unique LEF expertise to the table. With a community-based perspective and knowledge of educational best practice, local education funds have the capacity to make the case for educational equity in ways lawyers cannot. LEF relationships with schools and experiences convening community members are always a strong addition to legal efforts regarding statewide educational equity.

Learn from what others have done. Most states have had at least one school finance case. Find out what's been done in your state, learn from successful efforts across the country and, importantly, find out what has failed.

Put together a credible team. Well-known national and state experts in the field are critical for making the case in front of the court.

for USING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
To Accelerate Legal Strategies

ACCOUNTABLE SCHOOLS, ACCOUNTABLE PUBLIC: A Community Roundtable Series to Establish the Foundation of a Public Compact

Accountable Schools, Accountable Public is a model for public discussion focused on setting standards for a school system and crafting a comprehensive accountability system. This model, sponsored the League of Women Voters and the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, was designed to enlist New Yorkers' help in crafting a new court-ordered accountability system to guarantee a "sound, basic education" for all students. Although the model is used in direct connection with litigation in New York, it is applicable to other states and localities seeking to develop a shared vision for school accountability.

Accountable Schools, Accountable Public promotes a series of facilitated roundtable discussions in groups of eight to 10 people. The discussions bring together stakeholders to explore possibilities for school accountability systems and discuss what might work in their own school or district. The series is conducted in three sessions: (1) Setting Standards (Goals) for Our School System; (2) Understanding School Accountability Today and (3) Creating Comprehensive Accountability. The purpose and discussion questions for each session follow.

Session 1: Setting Standards for Our School System

The purpose of this session is to give participants the opportunity to consider carefully what the goals and objectives of the public school system and an accountability system ought to be. Participants review six possible overarching goals for a school system and then consider the following questions:

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1. Describe your background: what was school like for you?
2. Which of these goals do you think is the most important for the public school system? Why?
3. How have your experiences with the public schools shaped what you think about these goals?
4. Were the schools then effective at meeting their goals? How?
5. Has the need for accountability in the schools changed since then?
6. Does the public school system in your community do a good job of achieving the most important goals? If so, how? If not, why not?
7. What experiences and beliefs have helped form your ideas?

Session 2: Understanding School Accountability Today

The purpose of the second session is to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the current system for creating accountability in schools. Participants learn about the New York state accountability system, review three other views on how to improve school accountability and then consider the following questions:

1. Are schools now effectively held accountable for fulfilling their responsibility to provide students a meaningful education?
2. Of the views above, is there one that best fits your ideas and why?
3. Are there other ideas you would like to add?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each view when considered from the perspective of the students, the parents and the schools?
5. What experiences and beliefs have helped you form your ideas?
6. As you listen to others describe what has shaped their views, what new insights and ideas do you gain? What are the common concerns and ideas in your group?
7. Examine these views in light of your tax bill. What kinds of changes are you willing to pay for? What else are you willing to do to help make improvements in the public school system?

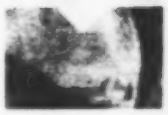
Session 3: Creating Comprehensive Accountability

The purpose of the last session is to explore the roles and responsibilities of each group of stakeholders (state and local governments, school districts, administrators, teachers, parents, students and community members) in a new accountability system. Participants learn about some current creative ways of tackling school accountability and then consider the following questions:

1. What added resources are needed in your school or district?
2. What climate for teaching and learning is needed to ensure the opportunity for a sound basic education?
3. What else do you think is needed to ensure a sound basic education?
4. If your school or district were guaranteed all the resources needed for a sound basic education for all students, could your school community guarantee a climate for successful teaching and learning that would result in high achievement for all students? If so, how? If not, why not?
5. In what ways could you be held responsible for improved student learning?
6. What could you hold other stakeholder groups accountable for?
7. What mechanisms would you create to ensure student learning?
8. What obstacles hinder comprehensive accountability?
9. Are there legal obstacles (rules or regulations that get in the way)?
10. Can vouchers play a useful role in ensuring school accountability?
11. Can charter schools play a useful role in ensuring school accountability?

Outcomes:

Participants in community roundtables often discover common ground and a greater desire and ability to work collaboratively to solve local problems — as individuals, as members of small groups and as members of large organizations in the community.



RESOURCES *for* LEGAL STRATEGIES *to Address Educational Inadequacies*

Paterson Education Fund's Information for Advocates

The Paterson Education Fund, through its advocacy efforts, educates the Paterson community on the requirements of the *Abbott* decision mandating additional funding for Paterson and other low-income school districts in the state. PEF's Web site (in the "For Advocates" section) is a good example of how an LEF can help the public hold a school district or state accountable for funding requirements.

How to get the resource: Log onto PEF's Web site. www.paterson-education.org/advocates1.html

Campaign for Fiscal Equity

The Campaign for Fiscal Equity's Web site contains an array of resources for school finance litigation and related public engagement efforts. CFE's resources include the following:

1. Information about Accountable Schools, Accountable Public, a statewide public engagement campaign sponsored by CFE and the League of Women Voters.
2. The court's remedial order with parameters for reform of the state funding system and definition of a sound basic education.
3. A costing-out primer to determine the amount of money needed to provide every child an opportunity to meet state education standards.

How to get the resource: Log onto CFE's Web site. www.cfequity.org.

Although LEFs may not be directly involved in bringing forward school reform litigation, they play an important role in creating grassroots support for the legal action and involvement in shaping it.

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Conclusion

Throughout *Communities at Work*, recurring themes illuminate both the evolution of local education funds and the role of community-based organizations in building public responsibility for public education.

Over time, LEFs have moved their focus from mini-grants at the classroom level to whole-school change to larger systemwide reform. Many LEFs have worked directly with district leaders to change professional development structures, revamp the role for library media centers in school improvement efforts and develop and implement high academic and performance standards. Some LEFs have worked directly with school board members, helping them see the impact of their policy decisions on the practice of teaching and learning. All these activities are most effective in creating demand for changes when they are ushered through a democratic process.

IMPORTANT THEMES

Key themes that arise from LEFs' implementation of the six strategic interventions include:

Focus on student achievement.

Effort is necessary to achieving results but does not ensure it. An important part of engaging people both within schools and between schools and communities is encouraging them to look at whether more students are indeed learning at higher levels. The bottom line for improving the quality of teaching, learning and comprehensive services for children and families is whether efforts result in better performance of students.

Engagement is essential to getting more people to take responsibility for improvements in education.

No individual or organization — regardless of how insightful or passionate — can create change alone. Collaboration is an essential element of the practice of democracy and of community change. Working with other people, engaging diverse ideas, widening the circle of participation and mobilizing appropriate resources all are necessary — albeit often difficult and messy — parts of the process.

To be effective, engagement requires coordination, persistence and hope. Talking, by itself, does not ensure action or progress. Conversations must be focused, common ground must be identified and differences must be respected but not allowed to stop progress. Single-shot attempts to meet with diverse groups won't work; engagement efforts must be ongoing and sustained. To create sustainable efforts, it is important to work collaboratively at the school and district levels, as well as with the community. Understanding the work of educators adds credibility. Developing strategic partners — and relationships with people beyond the typical sphere — provide not only important insights but the ability to implement plans once created.

Data are critical to change efforts.

Data can help to drive change by basing decisions on reality, rather than perceptions — but only if the information is accurate. In community dialogue, data can uncover questions that steer the conversation. Organizers and advocates need solid information to rally support of large numbers of people. Data drives arguments in

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No one individual or organization regardless of how insightful or passionate can create change or move to progress alone. Collaboration is an essential element of the practice of democracy and of community change.

court. Testimony in school finance litigation is often based on data gathered about best, or sometimes ineffective, practices. Communities use solid information about spending and changes in policy to hold the states or districts accountable for implementation.

Leadership is important.
Leaders set the initial tone and rally ongoing involvement. When citizens and community agencies see that key community leaders are committed to a process, they are more likely to stay with the process and bring others in to help.

Policy and legislative action are necessary to achieve sustained change.
Sometimes the changes needed at the community, school or district level are not possible without the support of resources and influence at the district level. Helping people understand complex policies is important in getting their participation and support for policy change.

Local education funds are an important catalyst to education and community change.
Through the six interventions described in detail in this guide, local education funds play an important role in creating the collaboration and engagement that can lead to community change. Because of their unique capacity to move efforts forward while retaining their neutrality, local education funds accelerate change because they:

- Bring together diverse sections of the community in dialogue and action
- Provide impetus for and sometimes serve as sources of training, technical assistance and resources
- Coordinate school-community partnerships or school-business partnerships
- Educate and inform parents, business leaders and other community members about the need for specific school reform efforts
- Organize collective action of large groups of parents and citizens

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A RETROSPECTIVE OF

LEF Work in Nine PEN Initiatives

The 12 vignettes highlighted in the guide tell the stories of the major PEN initiatives during the past eight years. The national initiatives, funders and participating local education funds follow (in order of appearance in the guidebook).

National Conversations on Education and Race (1998–2000)

In 1996, PEN formed a partnership with Public Agenda to probe the issue of education and race and to develop ways to help communities rethink public education. Together PEN and Public Agenda conducted research, developed a model for public engagement and began implementation using a variety of approaches in communities across the country. PEN and Public Agenda awarded grants to eight local education funds, which served as demonstration sites for conversations on education and race.

The initiative was made possible by funding from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Surdna Foundation.

Participating LEFs: Fund for Educational Excellence (Baltimore, MD); Forward in the Fifth (Berea, KY); Education Fund for Greater Buffalo (Buffalo, NY); Public Education and Business Coalition (Denver, CO); Partners in Public Education (Grand Rapids, MI); Hattiesburg Area Education Foundation (Hattiesburg, MS); Marcus A. Foster Educational Institute (Oakland, CA); Paterson Education Fund (Paterson, NJ).

Gender Equity Project (1997–98)

In this project local education funds assisted in disseminating results from the 1997 *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* on gender equity. LEFs' grassroots credibility allowed them to lead community conversations on gender equity that generated in-depth discussion about the survey's implications within a local context and to help their communities formulate local action plans.

The initiative was made possible by funding from the Metropolitan Life Foundation.

Participating LEFs: APPLE Corps (Atlanta, GA); Cleveland Education Fund (Cleveland, OH); Partners in Public Education (Grand Rapids, MI); Los Angeles Educational Partnership (Los Angeles, CA); Partners in Public Education (Memphis, TN); Marcus A. Foster Educational Institute (Oakland, CA); Public Education Fund (Providence, RI); San Francisco Education Fund (San Francisco, CA); Mary Lyon Education Fund (Shelburne Falls, MA); Alliance for Education (Worcester, MA).

Lilly School Governance Project (1994–95)

The Governance project aimed to assist local education funds to build community understanding about a school board's role and increase school board members' policymaking capacity. During the initiative, LEFs convened diverse community members and school boards in public forums to analyze and influence school governance roles, expectations, attitudes and effective school governance prac-

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tices. LEFs also organized board development activities to develop working relationships among board members and between the school board and the community.

The initiative was made possible by funding from the Lilly Endowment.

Participating LEFs: Allen County Local Education Fund (Fort Wayne, IN); APPLE Corps (Atlanta, GA); Grand Rapids Public Education Fund (Grand Rapids, MI); Metropolitan Area Committee Education Fund (New Orleans, LA).

Project Fostering Instructional Reform in Schools through Technology (FIRST) (1994–97)

In response to the need for schools to be the primary place where many poor and minority students have access to computers, software and the Internet, PEN launched the Project FIRST initiative. Project FIRST was designed to improve educational access to and use of technology in disadvantaged communities. Project FIRST worked to integrate technology into public school curricula and increase community involvement in the process by using the unique resources and capabilities of LEFs, their business partners and AmeriCorps members.

The initiative was made possible by funding from AmeriCorps and IBM.

Participating LEFs: APPLE Corps (Atlanta, GA); Boston Plan for Excellence in the Public Schools (Boston, MA); Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation (Charlotte, NC); New Visions for Public Schools (New York, NY); Marcus A. Foster Educational Institute (Oakland, CA); Philadelphia Education Fund (Philadelphia, PA); San Francisco Education Fund (San Francisco, CA); Educational Enrichment Foundation (Tucson, AZ); Alliance for Education (Worcester, MA).

Comprehensive School Health Initiative/Children's Health Insurance Project (1994–present)

LEFs have been working since 1994 to lead local community efforts to develop and sustain school health programs, with a focus on HIV-prevention education, enhancing health education for students and school staff and promoting general community wellness. Five LEFs were involved in community outreach efforts to enroll poor and disadvantaged children in the federal Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) by convening community dialogues and strengthening state and local partnerships. Participating LEFs continue to play an important role in addressing the comprehensive needs of students in public schools; they act as coordinators of school-community partnerships and provide training and technical assistance to help broad audiences understand and implement coordinated services for children.

The initiative is made possible by funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Division of Adolescent and School Health and the Health Resources and Services Administration/Bureau of Maternal and Child Health.

Participating LEFs: Academic Distinction Fund (Baton Rouge, LA); APPLE Corps (Atlanta, GA); The Education Alliance (Charleston, WV); Education Fund for Greater Buffalo (Buffalo, NY); Lancaster Foundation for Educational Enrichment (Lancaster, PA); Lincoln Public Schools Foundation (Lincoln, NE); Public Education Fund (Providence, RI); Mary Lyon Education Fund (Shelburne Falls, MA); Mon Valley Education Consortium (McKeesport, PA); Paterson Education Fund (Paterson, NJ).

School Finance Initiative (1998–2000)

In this initiative, four local education funds led community-based analyses of school budgets. These sites experimented with ways to inform the public about school finance and involve citizens more deeply in budgetary issues. The work of these LEFs, and their predecessors' similar work, demonstrated that school budgets are something that all citizens can — and should — understand.

The initiative was made possible by funding from the Ford Foundation.

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Participating LEFs: Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation (Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC); Lynn Business/Education Foundation (Lynn, MA); Metropolitan Nashville Public Education Foundation (Nashville, TN); and Wake Education Partnership (Raleigh, NC).

OERI Teacher Quality (1999–present)

In PEN's OERI Teacher Quality initiative, local education funds are defining teacher quality research priorities in their communities and translating data into formats citizens can understand. LEFs are conducting local research projects by convening community stakeholders and researchers to refine a national framework of teacher quality measures; using that framework to gather and analyze local data; translating the findings in community report cards and engaging both the public and policymakers about the findings.

The initiative is made possible by funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement at the U.S. Department of Education.

Participating LEFs: Hamilton County Public Education Foundation (Chattanooga, TN); Alliance for Quality Education (Greenville, SC); Lincoln Public Schools Foundation (Lincoln, NE); Los Angeles Educational Partnership (Los Angeles, CA); Mon Valley Education Consortium (McKeesport, PA); New Visions for Public Schools (New York, NY); Philadelphia Education Fund (Philadelphia, PA); Wake Education Partnership (Raleigh, NC).

Library Power (1993–2000)

Library Power was designed to create exemplary models of library media programs that are an integral part of the educational process, strengthen the role of the librarian and encourage collaboration among teachers, administrators and librarians that results in significant improvement in the teaching and learning process. In support of these goals, LEFs ran local Library Power projects in which schools and school districts received money and technical assistance to renovate library space, purchase new books and upgrade print and electronic collections and provide professional development for librarians, teachers and principals.

The initiative was made possible by funding from the DeWitt Wallace–Reader's Digest Fund.

Participating LEFs: APPLE Corps (Atlanta, GA); Academic Distinction Fund (Baton Rogue, LA); Bridgeport Public Education Fund (Bridgeport, CT); Cambridge Partnership for Public Education (Cambridge, MA); Cleveland Education Fund (Cleveland, OH); Educational Enrichment Foundation (Tucson, AZ); Forward in the Fifth (Berea, KY); Hamilton County Public Education Foundation (Chattanooga, TN); The Education Fund (Miami, FL); Lynn Business/Education Foundation (Lynn, MA); Lincoln Public Schools Foundation (Lincoln, NE); Metropolitan Nashville Public Education Foundation (Nashville, TN); Mon Valley Education Consortium (McKeesport, PA); New Haven Public Education Fund (New Haven, CT); New Visions for Public Schools (New York, NY); Paterson Education Fund (Paterson, NJ); Philadelphia Education Fund (Philadelphia, PA); Public Education Fund (Providence, RI); Wake Education Partnership (Raleigh, NC).

Helping Every Child Achieve (1998–2000)

In PEN's Standards initiative, Helping Every Child Achieve, more than 20 local education funds built community awareness of standards and moved community stakeholders to collective local action in support of standards implementation. The initiative was divided into two phases. In Phase I, 23 local education funds conducted an assessment of the status of local standards implementation and convened a range of stakeholders to develop action plans that promote standards reform. In Phase II, nine LEFs implemented action plans while focusing on developing strategies and tools to overcome challenges in implementing standards.

The initiative was made possible by funding from an anonymous donor, the C.S. Mott Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Grable Foundation.

Participating LEFs: APPLE Corps (Atlanta, GA); Fund for Educational Excellence (Baltimore, MD); Bridgeport Public Education Fund (Bridgeport, CT); Education Fund for Greater Buffalo (Buffalo, NY); Charlotte-Mecklenburg Education Foundation (Charlotte, NC); Public Education Foundation (Chattanooga, TN); Public Education and Business Coalition (Denver, CO); Durham Public Education Network (Durham, NC); Partners in Public Education (Grand Rapids, MI); Alliance for Quality Education (Greenville, SC); Hattiesburg Area Education Foundation (Hattiesburg, MS); Mobile Area Education Foundation (Mobile, AL); Metropolitan Nashville Public Education Foundation (Nashville, TN); New Visions for Public Schools (New York, NY); Paterson Education Fund (Paterson, NJ); Philadelphia Education Fund (Philadelphia, PA); Pittsburgh Council on Public Education (Pittsburgh, PA); Portland Public Schools Foundation (Portland, OR); Public Education Fund (Providence, RI); Wake Education Partnership (Raleigh, NC); Mary Lyon Education Fund (Shelburne Falls, MA); DC VOICE (Washington, DC).

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CREDITS

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The **Metropolitan Life Foundation** was established in 1976 by MetLife to support education, health and welfare and civic and cultural organizations. The primary objective of the MetLife Foundation is to assist tax-exempt organizations through a program of financial support, particularly in communities in which MetLife has a major presence. The Foundation's goals are to strengthen communities, promote good health and improve education. MetLife and the MetLife Foundation's longstanding commitment to education is underscored by their support of education-based activities in K-12 education, business, insurance and economic education and higher education.

Collaborative Communications Group, Inc., is a strategic communications consulting firm built around the belief that public engagement is essential to the improvement of public life and, particularly, public education. Collaborative Communications Group works in three portfolio areas: defining and analyzing the nature and impact of civic engagement in the context of organization, education and community change; developing tools and resources to increase and improve the practice of engagement; improving the management and communications capacity of organizations that serve as primary initiators or supporters of engagement activities.

Cris Gutierrez, Robert Hughes, Paul Reville and others on the 2001 PEN Annual Conference Planning Committee were instrumental in conceptualizing and refining the six strategic interventions presented here.

Photo on page 42 courtesy of David C. Snyder, U.S. Department of Education.

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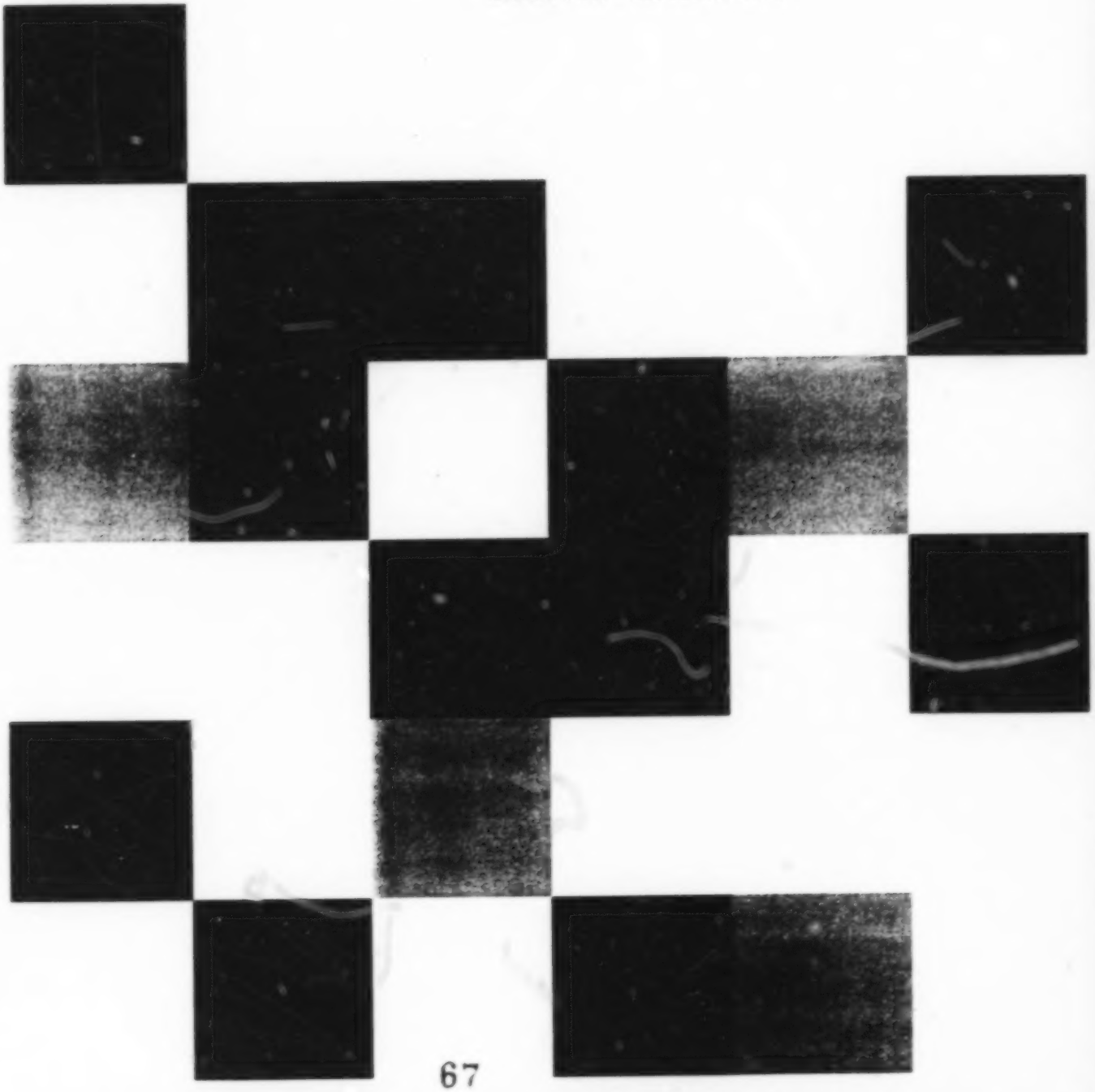

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